WITHDRAWN

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MISSIONARY SERMONS

BY

C. H. SPURGEON

Pacific Bible Seminary

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Twelve missionary sermons

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GOSPEL MISSIONS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 27, 1856, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

On behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."—Acts xiii. 49.

I SHALL not confine myself to the text. It being an old custom to take texts when we preach, I have taken one, but I shall address you, at large, upon a subject which I am sure will occupy your attention, and has done for many days and years past—the subject of gospel missions. We feel persuaded that all of you are of one mind in this matter, that it is the absolute duty as well as the eminent privilege of the Church to proclaim the gospel to the world. We do not conceive that God will do his own work without instruments, but that, as he has always employed means in the work of the regeneration of this world, he will still continue to do the same, and that it becomes the Church to do its utmost to spread the truth wherever it can reach the ear of man. We have not two opinions on that point. Some churches may have, but we have not. Our doctrines, although they are supposed to lead to apathy and sloth, have always proved themselves to be eminently practical; the fathers of the mission were all zealous lovers of the doctrines of the grace of God; and we believe, the great supporters of missionary enterprise, if it is to be successful, must always come from those who hold God's truth firmly and boldly, and yet have fire and zeal with it, and desire to spread it everywhere. But there is a point on which we have great division of opinion, and that is as to the reason why we have had so little success in our missionary labours. There may be some who say the success has been proportionate to the agency, and that we could not have been more successful. I am far from being of their opinion, and I do not think they themselves would express it on their knees before Almighty God. We have not been successful to the extent we might have expected, certainly not to an apostolic extent, certainly with nothing like the success of Paul or Peter, or even of those eminent men who have preceded us in modern times, and who were able to evangelize whole countries, turning thousands to God. Now, what is the reason of this? Perhaps we may turn our eyes on high, and think we find that reason in the sovereignty of God, which hath withholden his Spirit, and hath not poured out his grace as aforetime. I shall be prepared to grant all men may say on that point, for I believe in the ordination of everything by Almighty God. I believe in a present God in our defeats as well as in our successes; a God as well in the motionless air as in the careering tempest; a God of ebbs as well as a God of floods. But still we must look at home for the cause. When Zion travails, she brings forth children; when Zion is in earnest, God is in earnest about his work; when Zion is prayerful, God blesses her. We must not, therefore, arbitrarily look for the cause of our failure in the will of God, but we must also see what is the difference between ourselves and the men of Apostolic times, and what it is that renders our success so trifling in comparison with the tremendous results of Apostolic preaching. I think I shall be able to show one or two reasons why our holy faith is not so prosperous as it was then. In the first place, *we have not Apostolic men;* in the second place, they *do not set about their work in an Apostolic style;* in the third place, we have *not Apostolic churches* to back them up; and in the fourth place, we have not *the*

Apostolic influence of the Holy Ghost in the measure which they had it in ancient times.

1. First, WE HAVE FEW APOSTOLIC MEN IN THESE TIMES. I will not say we have none; here and there we may have one or two, but unhappily their names are never heard; they do not start out before the world, and are not noted as preachers of God's truth. We had a Williams once, a true apostle, who went from island to island, not counting his life dear unto him; but Williams is called to his reward. We had a Knibb, who toiled for his Master with seraphic earnestness, and was not ashamed to call an oppressed slave his brother; but Knibb, too, has entered into his rest. We have one or two still remaining, precious and treasured names; we love them fervently, and our prayers shall ever rise to heaven on their behalf. We always say, in our prayers, "God bless such men as Moffat! God bless those who are earnestly toiling and successfully labouring!" But cast your eyes around, and where can we find many such men? They are all good men; we find no fault with them; they are better than we; we, ourselves, shrink into nothingness compared with them; but we must still say of them that they are less than their fathers, they they differ from the mighty Apostles in many respects, which we think even they would not be slow to own. I am not speaking of missionaries only, but of ministers too; for I take it we have as much to mourn over in regard to the spread of the gospel in England as in foreign lands, and much to regret the lack of men filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

In the first place, we have not men with *Apostolic zeal*. Converted in a most singular way, by a direct interposition from heaven, Paul, from that time forward, became an earnest man. He had always been earnest, in his sin and in his persecutions; but after he heard that voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and had received the mighty office of an apostle, and had been sent forth a chosen vessel to the Gentiles, you can scarce conceive the deep, the awful earnestness which he manifested. Whether he did eat, or drink, or whatsoever he did, he did all for the glory of his God; he never wasted an hour; he was employing his time either in ministering with his own hands unto his necessities, or else lifting those hands in the Synagogue, on Mars-hill, or anywhere where he could command the attention of the multitude. His zeal was so earnest, and so burning, that he could not (as we unfortunately do) restrain himself within a little sphere; but he preached the Word everywhere. It was not enough for him to have it handed down that he was the Apostle of Pisidia, but he must go also to Pamphylia; it was not enough that he should be the great preacher of Pamphylia and Pisidia, but he must go also to Attalia; and when he had preached throughout all Asia, he must needs take ship to Greece, and preach there also. I believe not once only did Paul hear in his dream the men of Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us," but every day and hour he heard the cry in his ears from multitudes of souls, "Paul, Paul, come over and help us." He could not restrain himself from preaching. "Woe is unto me" he said "if I preach not the gospel. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ." Oh! if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us, with half a conviction, that we do not mean what we say. His eyes preached a sermon without his lips, and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts of his hearers. He preached with power, because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it, and could not contain himself unless he did do it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin, and then stand before his God, ready for his last account. Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege, and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men.

We have no eyes now like the eyes of the Saviour, which could weep over Jerusalem; we have few voices like that earnest impassioned voice which seemed perpetually to cry, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." If ministers of the gospel were more hearty in their work of preaching; if, instead of giving lectures and devoting a large part of their time to literary and political pursuits, they would preach the Word of God, and preach it as

if they were pleading for their own lives, ah! then, my brethren, we might expect great success; but we cannot expect it while we go about our work in a half-hearted way, and have not that zeal, that earnestness, that deep purpose which characterized those men of old.

Then, again, I take it we have not men in our days who can preach like Paul—*as to their faith.* What did Paul do? He went to Philippi; did he know a soul there? Not one. He had his Master's truth, and he believed in the power of it. He was unattended and devoid of pomp, or show, or parade; he did not go to a pulpit with a soft cushion in it to address a respectable congregation, but he walked through the streets and began to preach to the people. He went to Corinth, to Athens, alone, single-handed, to tell the people the gospel of the blessed God. Why? Because he had faith in the gospel and believed it would save souls, and hurl down idols from their thrones. He had no doubt about the power of the gospel; but now-a-days, my brethren, we have not faith in the gospel we preach. How many there are who preach a gospel, which they are afraid will not save souls; and, therefore, they add little bits of their own to it in order, as they think, to win men to Christ! We have known men who believed Calvinistic doctrines, but who preached Calvinism in the morning and Arminianism in the evening, because they were afraid God's gospel would not convert sinners, so they would manufacture one of their own. I hold that a man who does not believe his gospel to be able to save men's souls, does not believe it at all. If God's truth will not save men's souls, man's lies cannot; if God's truth will not turn men to repentance, I am sure there is nothing in this world that can. When we believe the gospel to be powerful, then we shall see it is powerful. If I walk into this pulpit, and say, "I know what I preach is true," the world says I am an egotist. "The young man is dogmatical." Ay, and the young man means to be; he glories in it, he keeps it to himself as one of his peculiar titles, for he does most firmly believe what he preaches. God forbid that I should ever come tottering up the pulpit stairs to teach anything I was not quite sure of, something which I hoped might save sinners, but of which I was not exactly certain. When I have faith in my doctrines, those doctrines will prevail, for confidence is the winner of the palm. He who hath courage enough to grasp the standard, and hold it up, will be sure enough to find followers. He who says, "I know," and asserts it boldly in his Master's name, without disputing, will not be long before he will find men who will listen to what he says, and who will say, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees." That is one reason why we do not succeed: we have not faith in the gospel. We send educated men to India in order to confound the learned Brahmins. Nonsense! Let the Brahmins say what they like; have we any business to dispute with them? "Oh, but they are so intellectual and so clever." What have we to do with that? We are not to seek to be clever in order to meet them. Leave the men of the world to combat their metaphysical errors; we have merely to say, "This is truth: he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that denieth it shall be damned." We have no right to come down from the high ground of divine authoritative testimony; and until we maintain that ground, and come out as we ought to do, girded with the belt of divinity—preaching not what *may* be true, but asserting that which God has most certainly revealed—we shall not see success. We want a deeper faith in our gospel; we want to be quite sure of what we preach. Brethren, I take it we have not the faith of our fathers. I feel myself a poor drivelling thing in point of faith. Why, methought sometimes I could believe anything; but now a little difficulty comes before me, I am timid, and I fear. It is when I preach with unbelief in my heart that I preach unsuccessfully; but when I preach with faith and can say, "I know my God has said, that in the self-same hour he will give me what I shall preach, and careless of man's esteem, I preach what I believe to be true," then it is that God owns faith and crowns it with his own crown.

Again: we have not enough *self-denial*, and that is one reason why we do not prosper. Far be it from me to say aught against the self-denial of those worthy brethren who have left their country to cross the stormy deep and preach the Word. We hold them to be men who are to be had in honour; but still I ask, where is the self-denial of the Apostles now-a-days? I think one of the greatest disgraces that ever was cast upon the church in these days was that last mission to Ireland. Men went over to Ireland, but like men who have valour's better part, brave bold men,

they came back again, which is about all we can say of the matter. Why do they not go there again? Why, they say the Irish "hooted" them Now, don't you think you see Paul taking a microscope out of his pocket, and looking at the little man who should say to him, "I shall not go there to preach because the Irish hooted me?" "What!" he says, "is this a preacher?—what a small edition of a minister he must be, to be sure!" "Oh! but they threw stones at us; you have no idea how badly they treated us!" Just tell that to the Apostle Paul. I am sure you would be ashamed to do so. "Oh! but in some places the police interfered, and said that we should only create a riot." What would Paul have said to that? *The police interfering!* I did not know that we had any right to care about governments. Our business is to preach the Word, and if we must be put in the stocks there let us lie; there would come no hurt of it at last. "Oh! but they might have killed some of us." That is just it. Where is that zeal which counted not its life dear so that it might win Christ? I believe that the killing of a few of our ministers would have prospered Christianity. However we might mourn over it, and none more than myself, I say the murder of a dozen of them would have been no greater ground for grief than the slaughter of our men by hundreds in a successful fight for hearths and homes. I would count my own blood most profitably shed in so holy a struggle. How did the gospel prosper aforetime? Were there not some who laid down their lives for it; and did not others walk to victory over their slain bodies; and must it not be so now? If we are to start back because we are afraid of being killed, heaven knows when the gospel is to spread over the world—we do not. What have other missionaries done? Have they not braved death in its direst forms, and preached the Word amid countless dangers? My brethren, we say again, we find no fault, for we, ourselves, might err in the same manner; but we are sure we are therein not like Paul. He went to a place where they stoned him with stones, and dragged him out as dead. Did he say, "Now for the future I will not go where they will ill-treat me?" No, for he says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck." I am sure we have not the self-denial of the Apostles. We are mere carpet-knights and Hyde-park-warriors. When I go to my own house and think how comfortable and happy I am, I say to myself, "How little I do for my Master! I am ashamed that I cannot deny myself for his truth, and go everywhere preaching his Word." I look with pity upon people who say "Do not preach so often; you will kill yourself." O my God! what would Paul have said to such a thing as that? "Take care of your constitution; you are rash; you are enthusiastic." When I compare myself with one of those men of old, I say, "Oh that men should be found calling themselves Christians, who seek to stop our work of faith and labour of love, for the sake of a little consideration about the 'constitution,' which gets all the stronger for preaching God's Word."

But I hear some one whispering, "You ought to make a little allowance." My dear friend, I make all allowance. I am not finding fault with those brethren; they are a good sort of people; we are "all honorable men;" but I will only say, that in comparison with Paul, we are less than nothing, and vanity; little insignificant Lilliputian creatures, who can hardly be seen in comparison with those gigantic men of old.

One of my hearers may perhaps hint that this is not the sole cause, and he observes, "I think you ought to make excuse, for ministers now cannot work miracles." Well, I have considered that too, and certainly it is a drawback, but, I take it, not a very great one; for if it had been, God would not have allowed it to exist. He gave that gift to the Church in its infancy, but now it needs it no longer. We mistake in attributing too much to miracles. What was one of them? Wherever the Apostles went they could speak the language of the people. Well, in the time it would have taken Paul to walk from here to Hindostan, we could learn Hindostani, and we can go over in a very little time by the means of travelling that are now provided: so that is no great gain there. Then, again, in order to make the gospel known amongst the people, it was necessary that miracles should be worked, so that every one might talk about it; but now there is a printing press to aid us. What I say to-day, within six months will be read across the Alleghanies; and so with other ministers, what they say and what they do can soon be printed off and distributed everywhere; so they have facilities for making themselves known which are not much behind the power of miracles. Again, we have a great advantage over the Apostles

Wherever they went they were persecuted, and sometimes put to death; but now, although occasionally we hear of the massacre of a missionary, the occurrence is rare enough. The slaughter of an Englishman anywhere would provoke a fleet of men-of-war to visit the offence with chastisement. The world respects an Englishman wherever he goes; he has the stamp of the great Cæsar upon him; he is the true cosmopolite—the citizen of the world. That could not be said of the poor despised Jews. There might be some respect paid to Paul, for he was a Roman citizen, but there would be none paid to the rest. We cannot be put to death now without a noise being made. The murder of two or three ministers in Ireland would provoke a tumult through the country; the government would have to interpose, the orderly of the land would be up in arms, and then we might preach with an armed constabulary around us, and so go through the land, provoking the priests, startling antichrist, and driving superstition to its dens for ever.

II. In the second place, WE DO NOT GO ABOUT OUR WORK IN AN APOSTOLIC STYLE. How is that? Why, in the first place, there is a general complaint that there is *not enough* preaching by ministers and missionaries. They sit down interpreting, establishing schools, and doing this, that, and the other. We have nothing to find fault with in this; but that is not the labour to which they should devote themselves; their office is preaching, and if they preached more, they might hope for more success. The missionary Chamberlain preached once at a certain place, and years afterwards disciples were found there from that one sermon. Williams preached wherever he went, and God blessed him; Moffat preached wherever he went, and his labours were owned. Now we have our churches, our printing-presses, about which a great deal of money is spent. This is doing good, but it is not doing *the good*. We are not using the means which God has ordained, and we cannot therefore expect to prosper. Some say there is too much preaching now-a-days, in England. Well, it is the tendency of the times to decry preaching, but it is "the foolishness of preaching" which is to change the world, It is not for men to say, "If you preached less, you might study more." Study is required well enough if you have a settled church; but the Apostles needed no study, I apprehend, but they stood up and delivered out the simple cardinal truths of religion, not taking one text, but going through the whole catalogue of truth. So I think, in itinerant evangelical labours, we are not bound to dwell on one subject, for then we need to study, but we shall find it profitable to deal out the whole truth wherever we go. Thus we should always find words to hand, and truths ever ready to teach the people.

In the next place I conceive that a great mistake has been made in *not affirming the divinity of our mission*, and standing fast by the truth, as being a revelation not to be proved by men, but to be believed; always holding out this, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." I am often grieved when I read of our missionaries holding disputes with the Brahmins, and it is sometimes said that the missionary has beaten the Brahmin because he kept his temper, and so the gospel had gained great honour by the dispute. I take it that the gospel was lowered by the controversy. I think the missionary should say, "I am come to tell you something which the One God of heaven and earth hath said, and I tell you before I announce it, that if you believe it you shall be saved, and if not, you shall be damned. I am come to tell you that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh, to die for poor unworthy man, that through his mediation, and death, and suffering, the people of God might be delivered. Now, if you will listen to me you shall hear the word of God: if you do not, I shake the dust of my feet against you, and go somewhere else." Look at the history of every imposture; it shows us that the claim of authority insures a degree of progress. How did Mahommed come to have so strong a religion in his time? He was all alone, and he went into the market-place and said, "I have received a revelation from heaven." It was a lie, but he persuaded men to believe it. He said, "I have a revelation from heaven." People looked at his face; they saw that he looked upon them earnestly as believing what he said, and some five or six of them joined him. Did he *prove* what he said? Not he. "You must," he said, "believe what I say, or there is no Paradise for you." There is a power in that kind of thing, and wherever he went his statement was believed, not on the ground of reasoning, but on his authority, which he declared to be from Allah; and in a century after he first proclaimed his imposture, a thousand sabres had flashed from a thousand sheaths, and his word had been proclaimed through Africa, Turkey, Asia, and even

in Spain. The man claimed authority—he claimed divinity; therefore he had power. Take again the increase of Mormonism. What has been its strength? Simply this—the assertion of power from heaven. That claim is made, and the people believe it, and now they have missionaries in almost every country of the habitable globe, and the book of Mormon is translated into many languages. Though there never could be a delusion more transparent, or a counterfeit less skilful, and more lying upon the very surface, yet this simple pretension to power has been the means of carrying power with it. Now, my brethren, *we have power;* we *are* God's ministers; we preach *God's* truth; the great Judge of heaven and earth has told us the truth, and what have we to do to dispute with worms of the dust? Why should we tremble and fear them? Let us stand out and say, "We are the servants of the living God; we tell unto you what God has told us, and we warn you, if you reject our testimony, it shall be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." If the people cast that away we have done our work. We have nothing to do with making men believe; ours is to testify of Christ everywhere, to preach and to proclaim the gospel to all men.

But there is one passage in the Bible which seems to militate against what I have said, if the common translation be true—the passage which says that Paul "disputed in the school of one Tyrannus." But this is better rendered in English, he "dialogued in the school of one Tyrannus." Albert Barnes says, that "disputed is not a happy translation," for there is no such idea conveyed by the word. Jesus, when he preached, "dialogued." When the man came and said to him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he "dialogued" with him. When another said unto him, "Speak, Lord, unto my brother, that he divide with me the inheritance," Christ did not dispute with him, but he "dialogued." His usual style was to address the people, and but rarely to dispute with men. We might give up all the books that have been written in defence of Christianity if we would but preach Christ, if, instead of defending the outposts, we were to say, "God will take care of them," and were at once to make a sortie on the enemy; then by God's Holy Spirit we should carry everything before us. O, Church of God! believe thyself invincible, and thou art invincible; but stay to tremble, and fear, and thou art undone. Lift up thy head and say, "I am God's daughter; I am Christ's bride." Do not stop to prove it, but affirm it; march through the land, and kings and princes shall bow down before thee, because thou hast taken thine ancient prowess and assumed thine ancient glory.

I have one more remark to make here with regard to the style in which we go to work. I fear that we have not enough of the divine method of *itinerancy.* Paul was a great itinerant: he preached in one place, and there were twelve converted there; he made a church at once; he did not stop till he had five hundred; but when he had twelve, he went off to another place. A holy woman takes him in; she has a son and daughter; they are saved and baptized—there is another church. Then he goes on; wherever he goes the people believe and are baptized, wherever he meets a family who believe, he or his companion baptizes all the house, and goes about his way still forming churches and appointing elders over them. We, now-a-days, go and settle in a place, make a station of it, and work around it by little and little, and think that is the way to succeed. No, no! ravage a continent; attempt great things and great things shall be done. But they say if you just pass over a place it will be forgotten like the summer shower, which moistens all, but satisfies none. Yes, but you do not know how many of God's elect may be there; you have no business to stop in one place; go straight on; God's elect are everywhere. I protest if I could not itinerate this country of England, I could not bear to preach. If I preached *here* always, many of you would become gospel hardened. I love to go ranging here, there, and everywhere. *My* highest ambition is this, that I may be found going through the entire land, as well as holding my head quarters in one position. I do hold that itinerancy is God's great plan. There should be fixed ministers and pastors, but those who are like apostles should itinerate far more than they do.

III. But I have a third thing to say which will strike home to some of us: that is, that WE HAVE NOT APOSTOLIC CHURCHES. Oh! had you seen an Apostolic church, what a different thing it would appear to one of our churches! as different, I had almost said, as light from darkness, as different as the shallow bed of the brook that is dried by summer is from the mighty rolling river, ever full, ever deep and

clear, and ever rushing into the sea. Now, where is our *prayerfulness* compared with theirs? I trust that we know something of the power of prayer here, but I do not think we pray like they did. "They broke bread from house to house, and did eat their meat with singleness of heart, giving glory to God." There was not a member of the Church, as a rule, who was half-hearted; they gave their souls wholly to God; and when Ananias and Sapphira divided the price, they were smitten with death for their sin. Oh! if we prayed as deeply and as earnestly as they did, we should have as much success. Any measure of success we may have had here has been entirely owing under God to your prayers; and wherever I have gone, I have boasted that I have a praying people. Let other ministers have as prayerful a people; let missionaries have as many prayers from the Church, and, all things being equal, God will bless them, and there will be greater prosperity than ever.

We have not the Apostolic mode of *liberality*. In the Apostles' days they gave all their substance. It was not *demanded* of them then, and it is not now; no one thinks of asking such a thing; still we have run to the other extreme, and many give nothing at all. Men who have thousands and tens of thousands are so eternally considerate for their families, albiet they *are* provided for, that they give nothing more than the servant girl who sits next to them. It is a common saying, that members of Christian Churches do not give in proportion to their wealth. We give because it is genteel and respectable. A great many of us give I hope, because we love the cause of God; but many of us say, "There is a poor bricklayer, working hard all the week and only earning just enough to keep his wife and family: he will give a shilling; now, I have so many pounds a week—I am a rich man—what shall I give? why, I will give half-a-crown." Another says, "I will give ten shillings this morning." Now, if they measured their wealth in comparison with his, they would see that he gives all he has left above his maintenance, while they give comparatively nothing. My brethren, we are not half Christians; that is the reason why we have not half success. We are Christianised, but I question whether we are thoroughly so. The Spirit of God hath not entered into us to give us that life, and fire, and soul, which they had in these ancient times.

IV. But lastly, as the result of the other things which have gone before, and perhaps partly as the cause of them too, WE HAVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THAT MEASURE WHICH ATTENDED THE APOSTLES. I see no reason whatever, why, this morning, if God willed it, I should not stand up and preach a sermon which should be the means of converting every soul in the place. I see no reason why I should not, tomorrow, preach a sermon which should be the means of the salvation of all who heard it, if God the Spirit were poured out. The word is able to convert, just as extensively as God the Spirit pleases to apply it; and I can see no reason why, if converts come in by ones and twos now, there should not be a time when hundreds and thousands shall come to God. The same sermon which God blesses to ten if he pleased he could bless to a hundred. I know not but that in the latter days when Christ shall come and shall begin to take the kingdom to himself, every minister of God shall be as successful as Peter on the day of Pentecost. I am sure the Holy Spirit is able to make the word successful, and the reason why we do not prosper is that we have not the Holy Spirit attending us with might and energy as they had then. My brethren, if we had the Holy Spirit upon our ministry, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated; their words might be broken and ungrammatical; there might be no polished periods of Hall, or glorious thunders of Chalmers; but if there were the might of the Spirit attending them, the humblest evangelists would be more successful than the most pompous of divines, or the most eloquent of preachers. It is extraordinary *grace*, not talent, that wins the day; extraordinary spiritual power, not extraordinary mental power. Mental power may fill a chapel; but spiritual power fills the Church. Mental power may gather a congregation; spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power. Oh! we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power, and when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them; but we know others, simple hearted worthy men who speak their country dialect, and who stand up to preach in their country place, and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power; hearts are broken, souls are saved, and sinners are born again. Spirit of the living God! we want thee. Thou art the life, the soul; thou art the source of thy people's success; without thee they can do nothing, with thee they can do everything.

Thus I have tried to show you what I conceive to be the causes of our partial non-

success. And now permit me, with all earnestness, to plead with you on behalf of Christ and Christ's Holy Gospel, that you would stir yourselves up to renewed efforts for the spread of his truth, and to more earnest prayers, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth even as it is in heaven. Ah! my friends, could I show you the tens of thousands of spirits who are now walking in outer darkness; could I take you to the gloomy chamber of hell, and show you myriads upon myriads of heathen souls in unutterable torture, not having heard the word, but being justly condemned for their sins; methinks you could ask yourselves, "Did I do anything to save these unhappy myriads? They have been damned, and can I say I am clear of their blood?" Oh! God of mercy, if these skirts be clear of my fellow creatures' blood, I shall have eternal reason to bless thee in heaven. Oh! Church of Christ! thou hast great reason to ask thyself whether thou art quite clean in this matter. Ye say too often, ye sons of God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Ye are too much like Cain; ye do not ask yourselves whether God will require your fellow-creatures' blood at your hands. Oh! there is a truth which says, "If the watchman warn them not, they shall perish, but their blood will he require at the watchman's hands." Ah! there ought to be more of us who are preaching to the heathen, and yet, perhaps, we are indolent and doing little or nothing. There are many of you, yea all of you, who ought to be doing far more than you are for evangelical purposes and the spread of Christ's gospel. Oh! put this question to your hearts; shall I be able to say to the damned spirit if he meets me in hell, "Sinner, I did all I could for thee?" I am afraid some will have to say, "No, I did not; it is true I might have done more; I might have laboured more, even though I might have been unsuccessful, but I did not do it." Ah, my dear friends, I believe there is great reason for some of us to suspect whether we believe our religion at all. An infidel once met a Christian, and said, "I know you do not believe your religion." "Why?" asked the Christian. "Because," said the other, "for years you have passed me on my way to my house of business. You believe, do you not, there is a hell, into which men's spirits are cast?" "Yes, I do," said the Christian. "And you believe that unless I believe in Christ I must be sent there?" "Yes." "You do not, I am sure, because if you did you must be a most inhuman wretch to pass me, day by day, and never tell me about it or warn me of it." I do hold that there are some Christians who are verily guilty in this matter; God will forgive them, the blood of Christ can even wash that out, but they are guilty. Did you ever think of the tremendous value of a single soul. My hearers, if there were but one man in Siberia unsaved, and all the world were saved besides, if God should move our minds, it would be worth while for all the people in England to go after that one soul. Did you ever think of the value of a soul? Ah! ye have not heard the howls and yells of hell; ye have not heard the mighty songs and hosannas of the glorified; ye have no notion of what eternity is, or else ye would know the value of a soul. Ye who have been broken by conviction, humbled by the Spirit, and led to cry for mercy through the covenant Jesus; ye know something of what a soul's value is, but many of my hearers do not. Could we preach carelessly, could we pray coldly, if we knew what a precious thing it is about which we are concerned? No, surely we should be doubly in earnest that God will please to save sinners. I am sure the present state of affairs cannot go on long; we are doing next to nothing; Christianity is at a low ebb. People think it will never be much better; that it is clear impossible to do wonders in these days. Are we in a worse condition than the Roman Catholic nations were when one man, a Luther, preached? Then God can find a Luther now. We are not in a much worse state than when Whitfield began to preach, and yet God can find his Whitfields now. It is a delusion to suppose that we cannot succeed as they did. God helping us we will; God helping us by his Spirit we will see greater things than this, at any rate, we will never let God's Church rest if we do not see it prosper, but we will enter our earnest hearty protest against the coldness and the lethargy of the times, and as long as this our tongue shall move in our mouth, we will protest against the laxity and false doctrine so rampant throughout the Churches, and then that happy double reformation—a reformation in doctrine and Spirit, will be brought about together. Then God knoweth but what we shall say, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows," and ere long the shout of Christ shall be heard. He, himself, shall descend from heaven; and we shall hear it said and sung, "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE MISSIONARIES' CHARGE AND CHARTA.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 21ST, 1861, BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

ON BEHALF OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Matthew xxviii. 18, 19.

WHILE I was meditating in private upon this text I felt myself carried away by its power. I was quite unable calmly to consider its terms, or to investigate its argument. The *command* with which the text concludes repeated itself again, and again, and again in my ears, till I found it impossible to study, for my thoughts were running hither and thither, asking a thousand questions, all of them intended to help me in answering for myself the solemn enquiry, "How am *I* to go and teach *all* nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" The practical lesson seemed to me to overwhelm in my mind the argument of which that lesson is but a conclusion, "Go ye and teach all nations." My ears seemed to hear it as if Christ were then speaking it *to me*. I could realize his presence by my side. I thought I could see him lift his pierced hand, and hear him speak, as he was wont to speak, with authority, blended with meekness, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the All-glorious God." Oh! I would that the Church could hear the Saviour addressing these words to her now; for the words of Christ are living words, not having power in them yesterday alone, but to-day also. The injunctions of the Saviour are perpetual in their obligation; they were not binding upon apostles merely, but upon *us* also, and upon every Christian does this yoke fall, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We are not exempt to-day from the service of the first followers of the Lamb; our marching orders are the same as theirs, and our Captain requires from us obedience as prompt and perfect as from them. Oh that his message may not fall upon deaf ears, or be heard by stolid souls!

Brethren, the heathen are perishing; shall we *let* them perish? *His* name is blasphemed; shall we be quiet and still? The honour of Christ is cast into the dust, and his foes revile his person and resist his throne; shall we his soldiers suffer this, and not find our hands feeling for the hilt of our sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God? Our Lord delayeth his coming; shall we begin to sleep, or to eat, or to be drunken? Shall we not rather gird up the loins of our mind, and cry unto him, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?" The scoffing sceptics of these last days have said that the anticipated conquest of the world for Christ is but a dream, or an ambitious thought, which crossed our leader's mind, but which never is to be accomplished. It is asserted by some that the superstitions of the heathen are too strong to be battered down by our teachings, and that the strongholds of Satan are utterly impregnable against our attacks. Shall it be so? Shall we be content foolishly to sit still? Nay, rather let us work out the problem; let us prove the promise of God to be true; let us prove the words of Jesus to be words of soberness; let us show the efficacy of his blood and the invincibility of his Spirit, by going in the spirit of faith, teaching all nations, and winning them to the obedience of Christ our Lord.

I do not know how to begin to preach this morning, but still it seems to me, standing here, as if *I* heard that voice saying, "Go thou, therefore, and teach all nations;" and my soul sometimes pants and longs for the liberty to preach Christ where he was never preached before; not to build upon another man's foundation, but to go to some untrodden land, some waste where the foot of Christ's minister was never seen, that there "the solitary place might be glad for us, and the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose." I have made it a solemn question whether I might not testify in China or India the grace of Jesus, and in the sight of God I have answered it. I solemnly feel that my position in England will not permit my leaving the sphere in which I now am, or else to-morrow I would offer myself as a missionary. Oh, do none of you hear the call this morning? You that are free from so great a work as that which is cast upon me—you that have talents as yet undevoted to any special end, and powers of being as yet unconsecrated to any given purpose, and unconfined to any one sphere: do you not hear my Master saying, in tones of plaintive sorrow, blended with an authority which is not to be denied, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" Oh that I could preach like Peter the Hermit—a better crusade than he! Oh that there were might in some human lip to move the thousands of our Israel to advance at once, unanimously and irresistibly to the world's conquest, like one tremendous tide rising from the depths of the ocean, to sweep over the sands, the barren sands which are now given up to desolation and death! Oh that once again the voice of thunder could be heard, and the lightning spirit could penetrate each heart, that as one man the entire Church might take the marching orders of her Lord, and go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of Israel's God! O Lord, if *we* fail to speak, fail not thou to speak; and if we know not how to bear thy burden, or express thine awful thoughts, yet speak thou with that all-constraining silent voice which well-trained ears can hear, and make thy servants obedient to thee now, for Christ's sake!

"Awake, thou Spirit, who of old
Didst fire the watchman of the Church's youth,
Who faced the foe, unshrinking, bold,
Who witness'd day and night the eternal truth,
Whose voices through the world are ringing still,
And bringing hosts to know and do thy will!

Oh that thy fire were kindled soon,
That swift from land to land its flame might leap!
Lord, give us but this priceless boon
Of faithful servants, fit for thee to reap
The harvest of the soul; look down and view
How great the harvest, yet the labourers few.

Oh haste to help ere we are lost!
Send forth evangelists, in spirit strong,
Arm'd with thy Word, a dauntless host,
Bold to attack the rule of ancient wrong;
And let them all the earth for thee reclaim,
To be thy kingdom, and to know thy name."

This morning we shall first dwell a little while upon the *command;* and then, secondly, we shall enlarge upon the *argument.* There is an argument, as you will perceive, "Go ye, *therefore,* and teach all nations."

I. First, my brethren, and very briefly indeed, a few things about the COMMAND.

And we must remark, first, what a singularly loving one it is. Imagine Mahomet on his dying bed saying to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" what would be his command? "Go ye, therefore, with sharp scimitars, and propound faith in the prophet, or death as the dread alternative; avenge me of the men who threw stones at the prophet; make their houses a dunghill, and cut them in pieces, for vengeance is mine, and God's prophet *must* be avenged of his enemies." But Christ, though far more despised and persecuted of men, and having a real power which that pretended prophet never had, says to his disciples, as he is about to ascend to heaven, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is the voice of love, not of wrath. "Go and teach them the power of my blood to cleanse, the willingness of my arms to embrace, the yearning of

my heart to save! *Go and teach* them. Teach them no more to despise me, no more to think my Father an angry and implacable Deity. Teach them to 'bow the knee, and kiss the Son,' and find peace for all their troubles, and a balm for all their woes in me. Go ye; speak as I have spoken; weep as I have wept; invite as I have invited; exhort, entreat, beseech and pray, as I have done before you. Tell them to come unto me, if they be weary and heavy laden, and *I* will give them rest; and say unto them, 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live.'" What a generous and gracious command is that of the text, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Note, too, how exceedingly plain is the command, "Go ye, *teach* all nations." The Romish Church has misunderstood this. She says, "Go ye, mystify all nations: sound in their ears a language once living, but now dead; take to them the Latin tongue, and let that be sounded with all the harmony of sweet music, and they will be converted; erect the sumptuous altar; clothe the priest in mystic garments; celebrate mysterious rites, and make the heathen wonder; dazzle them with splendour; amaze them with mystery." But, "Nay," says Christ, "nay, go ye and *teach*." Why, it is the mother's work with her child; it is the tutor's work with the boy and with the girl—"go ye, and teach." How simple! Illustrate; explain; expound; tell; inform; narrate. Take from them the darkness of ignorance; reveal to them the light of revelation. Teach! Be content to sit down, and tell them the very plainest and most common things. It is not your eloquence that shall convert them; it is not your gaudy language or your polished periods that shall sway their intellects. Go and teach them. Teach them! Why, my hearer, I say again, this is a word which has to do with the rudiments of knowledge. We do not preach to children; we teach them; and we are not so much to preach to nations; that word seems too big and great for the uncivilized and childish people; go ye, and teach them first the very simplicities of the cross of Christ.

And note how he puts it next. Who are to be taught? "Go ye and teach *all nations*." The Greek has his philosophers; teach *him*, he is but a child; he is a fool, though he thinketh himself to be wise. There be polite nations which have a literature of their own, far larger and more extensive than the literature of the Christian: teach them nevertheless; they are to be *taught*, and unless they are willing to take the learner's place, and to become as little children, they can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Do not debate and argue with them; put not yourself with them upon their level as a combatant concerning certain dogmas; insist upon it that *I* have sent you—sent you to teach the most erudite and profoundly learned; and when you shall claim it, I am with you always to back your claim, and men shall be willing to sit at your feet to be taught the name of Jesus.

I do not know whether *all* our missionaries have caught the idea of Christ—"Go ye and *teach* all nations;" but many of them have, and these have been honoured with many conversions. The more fully they have been simple teachers, not philosophers of the Western philosophy, not eager disputants concerning some English dogma, I say the more plainly they have gone forth as teachers sent from God to teach the world, the more successful have they been. "Go ye, therefore, and teach." Some may think, perhaps, there is less difficulty in teaching the learned than in teaching the uncivilized and barbarous. There is the same duty to the one as to the other: "Go and teach." "But they brandish the tomahawk." Teach them, and lie down and sleep in their hut, and they shall marvel at your fearlessness and spare your life. "But they feed on the blood of their fellows; they make a bloody feast about the cauldron in which a man's body is the horrible viand." *Teach* them, and they shall empty their war-kettle, and they shall bury their swords, and bow before you, and acknowledge King Jesus. "But they are brutalised; they have scarce a language—a few clicking sounds make up all that they can say." Teach them, and they shall speak the language of Canaan, and sing the songs of heaven. The fact has been proved, brethren, that there are no nations incapable of being taught, nay, that there are no nations incapable afterwards of teaching others. The Negro slave has perished under the lash, rather than dishonour his Master. The Esquimaux has climbed his barren steeps, and borne his toil, while he has recollected the burden which Jesus bore. The Hindoo has patiently submitted to the loss of all things, because he loved Christ better than all. Feeble Malagasay women have been prepared to suffer and to die, and have taken joyfully suffering for Christ's sake. There has been heroism in every land for Christ: men of every colour and of every race have died for *him;* upon his altar has been

found the blood of all kindreds that be upon the face of the earth. Oh! tell me not they cannot be taught. Sirs, they can be taught to die for Christ; and this is more than some of you have learned. They can rehearse the very highest lesson of the Christian religion—that self-sacrifice which knows not itself but gives up all for him. At this day there are Karen missionaries preaching among the Karens with as fervid an eloquence as ever was known by Whitfield; there are Chinese teaching in Borneo, Sumatra, and Australia, with as much earnestness as Morison or Milne first taught in China. There are Hindoo evangelists who are not ashamed to have given up the Brahminical thread, and to eat with the Pariah, and to preach with him the riches of Christ. There have been men found of every class and kind, not only able to be taught, but able to become teachers themselves, and the most mighty teachers too, of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well was that command warranted by future facts, when Christ said, "Go ye, teach all nations."

But, brethren, the text says, "*baptizing them.*" They are to be taught, and afterwards they are to be baptized. I know not why it is that we yield to the superstitions of our Christian brethren, so much as to use the word *baptize* at all. It is not an English, but a Greek word. It has but one meaning, and cannot bear another. Throughout all the classics, without exception, it is not possible to translate it correctly, except with the idea of immersion; and believing this, and knowing this, if the translation is not complete, we will complete it this morning. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, *immersing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now, I think that our Missionary Society, while it may take precedence in matters of time—for it was the first that was ever commenced with the exception of the Moravians—ought also to take precedence in matters of purity, because we *can* carry out this text in every country, teaching first and baptizing afterwards. We do not understand the philosophy of baptizing, and afterwards teaching. We hold that we must teach first, and then, when men are discipled, we are to baptize them. Not the nations; the Greek does not bear that interpretation, but those who have been discipled we are to baptize into the Sacred Name. *We* think that our brethren do serious damage to the Gospel by baptizing children. We do not think their error a little one. We know it does not touch a vital point; but we do believe that infant baptism is the prop and pillar of Popery, and it being removed, Popery and Puseyism become at once impossible. You have taken away all idea of a national godliness and a national religion, when you have cut away all liberty to administer Christian ordinances to unconverted persons. We cannot see any evil which would follow, if our brethren would renounce their mistake; but we can see abundant mischief which their mistake has caused, and in all kindness, but with all fidelity, we again enter our solemn protest against their giving baptism to any but disciples, to any but those who are the followers of the Lamb. Throw down her hedges? Give her supper and her baptism to those that are not Christ's people? Break down her walls? Remove her barricades? God forbid! Except a man be renewed in heart, we dare not allow him to participate in the ordinances which belong to Christ's Church. Oh! it is a disastrous thing to call unconverted children Christians, or to do anything which may weaken their apprehension of the great fact, that until they be converted they have no part or lot in this matter. Brethren, if you differ from me on this point, bear with me, for my conscience will not let me conceal this solemn truth. To you who agree with me I say, while our other friends can do in some things more than we can,—and we rejoice in their efforts, and would heartily bless God that they have shown more activity than ourselves,—yet we ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we are a whit behind. We are a body of Christians who can fairly and purely teach and baptize; we can obey this command of Christ abroad, as well as at home, without running counter to our practice in one place by our practice in the other; we ought to be first and foremost, and if we be not, shame shall cover us for our unfaithfulness. Again, I say, I hear that voice ringing in the Baptist's ear, above that of any other man, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

I have endeavoured to be brief, but I find I have been long, and therefore pass at once to the argument with which the text commences.

II. The ARGUMENT is this: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations."

Three things here. Christ had suffered, bled and died; he had now risen from the dead. As the effect of his finished work, he had as mediator received all power in heaven and in earth. There is no allusion here to his inherent power that is not

given to him: that is his native right; he has, as God, all power in heaven and in earth. The text relates to him as mediator. As mediator he had not this power once; he was weak, he was despised, he was forsaken even of his God. But now, having finished the work which was given him to do, his Father honours him. He is about to lift him to his right hand, and gives him, as the result of resurrection, all power in heaven and in earth. Three things, then. First, this is the picture of the Church's history, and *therefore* she should teach all nations. Secondly, this is the Church's right. Thirdly, it is the Church's might; and for all these reasons she ought to teach all nations.

1. First, this is the Church's *picture*. Christ suffers, bleeds, dies. Do you give up his cause? Do you look upon it as forlorn and desolate? He is nailed to the tree; the world abhors him, fools gaze, and sinners laugh. Do you lay down your weapons and say, it is idle to defend such a man as this? It is all over now, he bows his head upon the cross. "It is finished," saith he; and do your unbelieving hearts say, "Ay, indeed, it is finished; his career is over, his hopes are blighted, his prospects withered?" Ah! little do you know that his shame was the mother of his future glory; that the stooping was the rising, that the crown of thorns was in fact the fruitful root out of which sprang the eternal crown of glory. He is put into the grave: do you say that there is the grave of all your faith could believe, or your hope could suggest? He rises, brethren, and his resurrection takes effect and fruit from the fact that he died and was buried. Do you not see the picture? We have been sending out heralds of the cross these eighteen hundred years; they have landed upon many a shore to die. Fever has taken off its hundreds; cruel men have slain their scores; from the first day until now, the record of the mission is written in blood. Somewhere or other there always must be martyrs for Christ. It seems as if the Church never could plough a wave without a spray of gore. She is still in Madagascar persecuted, afflicted, tormented; still are her ministers hunted about like partridges upon the mountains, and her blood is dying the shambles of her slayers. Do you give up all hope? Shall we, as we look upon the tombs of our missionaries, say that Christ's cause is dead? Brethren, as you turn over the long roll, and read the names of one after another who sleep in Jesus, shall you say, "Let us close the doors of the mission-house; let us cease our contributions; it is clear the case is hopeless, and the cause can never have success?" Nay, rather, the Church must suffer that she may reign; she must die that she may live; she must be stained with blood, that she may be robed in purple; she must go down into the earth, and seem to be buried and forgotten, that the earth may help the woman, that she may be delivered of the man child. Courage! courage! courage! The past is hopeful, because to the eye it seemeth hopeless; the cause is glorious, because it has been put to shame. Now, now let us gather the fruits of the bloody sowing; let us now reap the harvest of the deep ploughing of agony and suffering which our ancestors have endured.

I think that no true-hearted Christian will ever give up any enterprise which God has laid upon him, because he fears its ultimate success. "Difficult," said Napoleon, "is not a French word." "Doubtful," is not a Christian word. We are *sure* to succeed; the gospel *must* conquer. It is possible for heaven and earth to pass away, but it is not possible for God's Word to fail; and therefore it is utterly impossible that any nation, or kindred, or tongue should to the end stand out against the attacks of love, against the invasion of the armies of King Jesus.

Thus, then, you see, a fair argument can be built upon the text. Inasmuch as Christ is to his people a picture of what they are to be, inasmuch as by his suffering all power was given to him in heaven and in earth, so after the sufferings of the Church, the wounds of her martyrs, and the deaths of her confessors, power shall be given to her in heaven and in earth, and she shall reign with Christ over the nations gloriously.

2. We now take a second view of the argument. This is the Church's *right*. All power is given to Christ in heaven and in earth. What then? Why this. Kings and princes, potentates and power, are ye aware that your thrones have been given away? Do ye know it, ye crowned heads, that your crowns have been given—given away from you to one who claims to be King of kings and Lord of lords? Do ye pass decrees forbidding the gospel to be preached? We laugh at you! Ye have no power to prevent it, for all power is given unto Christ in heaven and in earth. Do ye say that the missionary has no right upon your shore? The virgin daughter of Zion shaketh her head at you, and laugheth you to scorn. She has right anywhere and everywhere; she has rights in heaven without limit, and rights in earth without bound; for all power is given to her head in heaven and in earth, and she therefore has a patent, a claim which is not to be disputed, to take to herself all countries and all kingdoms, because the power

above is given unto Christ. What is that man doing on yonder shore? He has landed on an island in the South Seas; he is an intruder, banish him at once! Sirs, mind what you do, for surely ye fight against God. But the man is sent away, he comes back again, or if not he, another. A severer edict is passed this time, "Let us slay him, that the inheritance may still be ours." But another comes, and another, and another. Why do you stand up and take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed? These men are not intruders, they are ambassadors come to make peace; nay, more, they are delegates from heaven, come to claim the rightful heritage of King Jesus. Ye, in putting them away as intruders, have denied the rights of Christ; but to deny is one thing, and to disprove another. He hath still a right to you, and therefore hath the missionary still a right to come whithersoever he will, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. Once or twice in my life I have met with some miserable little ministers, who, when I have gone into a village to preach, have questioned my right to preach in the village, because I ought to have asked them first, or to have consulted them. And can Christian men look on a district as their own dominion, and reckon God's servant as a poacher on their estates, or a brigand in their territories? Is there any place on this earth that belongs to any man so that he can shut out God's ministers? We once for all put our foot upon any claim so ridiculous. Wherever there is found a man, there is the minister free to preach. The whole world is our parish; we know of no fetter upon our feet, and no gag upon our lips. Though kings should pass laws, the servants of Christ can bear the penalty, but they cannot disobey their Master; though the Emperor should say the gospel should not be preached by any unauthorized denomination in France, as I have heard he has said of late, we care not for him. What cares the Church for a thousand Emperors? Their resolutions are mockery, their laws waste-paper; the Church never was yet vassal to the state, or servile slave to principalites and powers, and she neither can nor will be. At all the laws of states she laughs, and utterly defies them, if they come in the way of the law of Christ which says, "Teach the gospel to every creature." Brethren, I say, the Church has a right anywhere and everywhere—a right, not because she is tolerated; the word is insult, not because the law permits; the law permitting or not permitting, tolerated or untolerated, everywhere beneath the arch of God's heaven, God's servants have a right to preach. Oh that they would claim the right, and in every place teach and preach Jesus Christ continually!

3. But now, lastly, it seems to me that the argument of the text contains the Church's *might*. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Ye have power to teach; fear not. Let this be your encouragement; you must succeed, you shall prevail. There never lived another man save Christ, who could say, "All power is given me on earth." Canute puts his throne by the side of the sea, but the waves wet his person, and prove to his flattering courtiers that he is but a man. What power have kings over the lightning, or the rushing winds? Can they control the tides, or bid the moon stand still? Power is not given unto man, even upon earth. Much less could any man say, all power in heaven belonged to him. This is a singular expression, one which only could be used by Christ; and if any other should attempt to use it, it were an imposition, and a blasphemy; but the Lord Jesus Christ can say to-day, as he said then, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Let us think, then, all power is given to Christ in providence. Over common daily events he has supreme authority. You have launched upon the sea, upon a mission-voyage; he rules the waves, and wings the winds; fear not, for tempest is his trembling slave. You have come near the shore; but there are hidden reefs and sunken rocks; fear not, for all power is given to him in the lowest deep to guide you safely, and to bring you to your desired haven. A band of men meet you upon the shore, brandishing their weapons. You are unarmed; you have nothing but the Word. You shall now prove that "more is he that is with you than all they that be with them." Go, in this your might. All power is given to Christ—power over the wills of men, as well as over the waves of the sea. But political occurrences prevent your landing on a certain country; through treaties, or a want of treaties, there is no room for the missionary in such-and-such an empire, *pray*, and the gates shall be opened; *plead*, and the bars of brass shall be cut in twain. Christ has power over politics. He can make wars, and create peace, with a view to the propagation of his Word. He can change the hearts of princes, and preside in the counsels of senates; he can cause nations that have long been shut up, to be opened to the truth. And, indeed, what a wonderful proof we have had of late, that all power belongs unto Christ, for human

skill has been yoked to the chariot of the gospel. How wondrously, my brethren, have the inventions of man of late years progressed! How could we have preached the gospel to all nations—how could we have even known that America existed, if it had not been that the Lord put it into the mind of Columbus to discover the New World! And how wearisome our life, if with the ordinary slow navigation of the ancient times we had to journey among all nations! But now we are carried across the waves so rapidly that distance is annihilated, and time forgotten. Truly God has opened up the world, and brought it to our threshhold; if he has not made a smaller world, at least he has made it more convenient and nearer to our hand. And then see how countries, which once could not be reached, have been opened to us. The Celestial King of China, the rebel prince, invites us to come and preach. He does not merely permit—he invites; he builds places of worship; he is prepared, he says, that his brethren should come and teach him, and teach all his subjects, for they are imperfectly taught in the things of God. And the Imperial Sovereign of China, too, though he does not invite, permits the missionaries to go among his millions. There is perfect liberty for us to preach to four hundred millions of persons who before had never seen the light of Calvary. And there is India, too, given up to our dominion; and the old Company, which always impeded us, rolled up in its shroud and laid in its grave. And there are other lands and other places which once seemed to be environed by impassable mountains, into which we have now a road. Oh, for the will to dash through that road riding upon the white horses of salvation! Oh, for the heart, the spirit, and the soul to avail ourselves of the golden opportunity, and to preach Christ where he has never been preached before! All power, then, we can clearly see, over everything in this world has been given to Christ, and has been used for the propagation of his truth.

But, brethren, let us recollect, that power is given to Christ in heaven as well as on earth. All angels bow before him, and the cherubim and seraphim are ready to obey his high behests. Power is given to him over the plenitude of the Holy Spirit; he can pour out the mysterious energy in such abundance that nations can be born in a day. He can clothe his ministers with salvation, and make his priests shout aloud for joy. He has power to intercede with God, and he shall presently send out men to preach, presently give the people the mind to hear, and give the hearers the will to obey. We have in the midst of us to-day our Leader. He is not gone from us. If his flesh and blood be absent, yet in body as well as spirit he still lives, adorned with the dew and beauty of his youth. As for the Mahomedan, *his* leader has long ago rotted in his coffin; but ours lives, and because he lives, his truth and his cause live also. We have with us to-day a Leader whose power is not diminished, whose influence in the highest heavens has suffered no impairing. He is universal Lord. Oh, let our efforts be worthy of the power which he has promised; let our zeal be in some respect akin to his zeal, and let our energy prove that the energy divine has not been withdrawn.

I wish that I could preach this morning; but the more earnestly I feel, the more scant are my words with which to express my emotions. I have prayed to God, and it is a prayer I shall repeat till I die—I have prayed that out of this Church there may go many missionaries. I will never be content with a congregation, or with a Church, or even with ministers, many of whom have already gone out of our midst. We must have missionaries from this Church. God's people everywhere will I trust aid me in training young soldiers for my Master's army. God will send the men, and faith will find the means, and we will ourselves send out our own men to proclaim the name of Jesus. Brethren, it is a singular thing, there are some young men who get the idea into their minds that they would like to go into foreign lands; but these are frequently the most unfit men, and have not the power and ability. Now, I would that the divine call would come to some gifted men. You who have, perhaps, some wealth of your own, what could be a better object in life than to devote yourself and your substance to the Redeemer's cause? You young men, who have brilliant prospects before you, but who as yet have not the anxieties of a family to maintain, why, would it not be a noble thing to surrender your brilliant prospects, that you may become a humble preacher of Christ? The greater the sacrifice, the more honour to yourself and the more acceptable to him. I have questioned my own conscience, and I do not think I could be in the path of duty if I should go abroad to preach the Word, leaving this field of labour; but I think many of my brethren now labouring at home might with the greatest advantage surrender their charges, and leave a land where they would scarce be missed, to go where their presence would be as valuable as the presence of a thousand such as they are here. And oh! I long that we may see young men out of the universities, and

students in our grammar schools—that we may see our physicians, advocates, tradesmen, and educated mechanics, when God has touched their hearts, giving up all they have, that they may teach and preach Christ. We want Vanderkists; we want Judsons and Brainerds over again. It will never do to send out to the heathen men who are of no use at home. We cannot send men of third and tenth class abilities; we must send the highest, and best. The bravest men must lead the van. O God, anoint thy servants, we beseech thee; put the fire into their hearts that never can be quenched; make it so hot within their bones that they must die or preach, that they must lie down with broken hearts, or else be free to preach where Christ was never heard. Brethren, I envy any one among you—I say again with truth, I envy you—if it shall be your lot to go to China, the country so lately opened to us. I would gladly change places with you. I would renounce the partial ease of a settlement in this country, and renounce the responsibilities of so large a congregation as this with pleasure, if I might have your honours. I think sometimes that missionaries in the field—if it be right to compare great things with such small ones—might say to you, as our English king did to his soldiers at the battle of Agincourt, changing the word for a moment—

> "Ministers in England, now a bed,
> Might think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
> And hold their manhood's cheap, while any speak
> Who fought with us upon this glorious day."

Have we none out of our sixteen hundred members—have we none out of this congregation of six thousand—who can say, "Here am I, send me?" Jesus! is there not one? Must heathens perish? Must the gods of the heathen hold their thrones? Must thy kingdom fail? Are there none to own thee, none to maintain thy righteous cause? If there be none, let us weep, each one of us, because such a calamity has fallen on us. But if there be any who are willing to give all for Christ, let us who are compelled to stay at home do our best to help them. Let us see to it that they lack nothing; for we cannot send them out without purse or scrip. Let us fill the purse of the men whose hearts God has filled, and take care of them temporally, leaving it for God to preserve them spiritually.

May the Lord, the Divine Master, add his blessing to the feeble words that I have uttered; and let me not conclude till I have said, *I* must teach *you* too, and this is the teaching of God—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Trust him with your soul, and he will save you. For "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

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Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

A YOUNG MAN'S VISION.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 16TH, 1868, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

Being the Annual Sermon of the Young Men's Association in aid of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"Your young men shall see visions."—Acts ii. 17.

MANY visions have led to the most disastrous results. When Napoleon had a vision of a universal monarchy over which he should preside, with the French eagle for his ensign, he drenched the lands in blood. Many visions have been wretchedly delusive. Men have dreamed of finding the fairy pleasure in the dark forest of sin. Carnal joys have danced before their eyes as temptingly as the *mirage* in the desert, and they have pursued the phantom forms to their misery in this world, and to their eternal ruin in the next. Mistaking license for liberty, and madness for mirth, they have dreamed themselves into hell. Many dreams have been enervating—sucking the life-blood out of men as vampires do. Men have passed from stern reality into dream-land, and while seemingly awakened, have continued like somnambulists to do all things in their sleep. Many pass all their days in one perpetual day-dream, speculating, building castles in the air, thinking of what they would do—if, and vowing how they would behave themselves—suppose. With fine capacities they have drivelled away existence: as their theory of life was born of smoke, so the result of their lives has been a cloud. The luxurious indolence of mere resolve, the useless tossings of regret—these have been all their sluggard life.

For all this, good and grand visions are not unknown—visions which came from the excellent glory; visions which, when young or old men have seen them, have filled them with wisdom, and grace, and holiness; visions which have wrought with such effect upon their minds that they have been lifted up above the level of the sons of men, and made sons of God, co-workers with the Eternal. Such visions are given to men whose eyes have been illumined by the Holy Spirit—visions which have come of that eye-salve which only the Holy Ghost can apply; visions which are not bestowed on carnal men, nor unveiled to the impure in heart; visions reserved for the men elect of God, who are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and made meet to be partakers of the witness of God and the testimony of his Son.

All divine things, when they first come to men from the Lord, are as

visions, because man is so little prepared to believe God's thoughts and ways, that he cannot think them to be real. They appear to us to be too great, too good to be real, and we look at them rather as things to be desired and wished for than as things that may be actually ours. It must be so while Jehovah's ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts. It must be so, that even divine mercy should at first be a burden to the prophet who has its message to deliver, and that the eternal promise should be a vision to the seer who first receives it. We are so gross and carnal, even when most clarified and made fit to receive divine impressions, that God's spiritual messages and directions to us must usually at the first float dimly before the sense, and only in after thoughts become solid and clear. We must take care that we do not neglect heavenly monitions through fear of being considered visionary; we must not be staggered even by the dread of being styled fanatical, or out of our minds, for to stifle a thought from God is no mean sin.

How much of good in this world would have been lost if good men had quenched the first half-fashioned thoughts which have flitted before them! I mean, for instance, had Martin Luther taken the advice of his teacher when he said to him, "Go thy way, silly monk! Go to thy cell, and pray God, and if it be his will he will reform the abuses of this church, but what hast thou to do with it?" Supposing the agitated monk had administered an opiate to his soul, what then? Doubtless the gospel to Luther at the first was dim enough, and the idea of reform most vague and indistinct, but had he closed his heart to his vision, how long might not the Romish darkness have brooded over the multitudes of Europe? And George Fox, that most eminent of dreamers, who dreamed more and more vividly than any other man, where had been all the testimonies for a spiritual religion, where all the holy influences for benevolence, for peace, for anti-slavery, for I know not what besides, which have streamed upon this world through the agency of the Society of Friends, if the wild Quaker had been content to let his impressions come and go and be forgotten? These things, which nowadays are ordinary Christian doctrines, were considered in his day to be but the prattle of fanatics; even as the reforms which some of us shall live to see are denounced as revolutionary, or ridiculed as Utopian. O young men, if you have received a thought which dashes ahead of your times, hold to it and work at it till it comes to something. If you have dreamed a dream from the Lord, turn it over and over again till you are quite sure it is not steam from a heated brain, or smoke from hell, and when it is clear to your own heart that it is fire from off God's altar, then work and pray, and wait your time. Perhaps it may take fifty years to work that thought out, or what is worse, you may never live to see it realised, but what of that? *You* may have to leave that thought sown in the dust, but the thought will not die, but produce a harvest when you are with the angels. Do not, I pray you, because the thing happens to seem new, or too enthusiastic, or too far ahead, be snubbed into putting it into a corner, but take care of it, and nurture it; and if it be not of God, a little experience will disabuse you of it let us hope; but if it be of the Lord, you will grow in your attachment to it, and by-and-by God will find an opportunity for you to make it practical. The

great Father of spirits does, in fact, say to you when he puts a great design into your keeping, as Pharaoh's daughter said to Jochebed, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages;" and though the Moses that you nurse may not deliver Israel in your lifetime, yet shall you have your wages if you nurse the thought for God.

Many suggestions which come from God to men, are not so much visions to them as they are to the outside world. And need we wonder at this? Why, men of science and art have to endure the same ordeal. Stephenson declares that he will make a machine which will run without horse-power, at the rate of twelve miles an hour—and how the Tory benches of the House of Commons, loaded then as now with stupidity, roared at the man as a born fool! How was it proved to a demonstration that if the engine began to work, the wheels might revolve, but the engine never would move an inch! Or if it moved at a great speed, the passengers would not be able to breathe! Yet Stephenson lived to see his dream fulfilled, and we have lived to see it a much more wonderful power still. Now, if men of science can endure this, and if we members of the Baptist Mission recollect still the roars of laughter which were launched by Sydney Smith against "the inspired cobbler," when he talked about the conquest of India for the Lord Jesus Christ, we may well be prepared, when we obtain an inspiration from God, to put up with a world of scorn, and opposition, and contempt for a little time, and to say, "Never mind, there is a day coming that shall reverse the hasty judgment of this world; you sons of darkness, are not a fair jury to sit upon questions of light; you blind men who know not God, nor the glory of his power, are not qualified to mount the bench and sit in judgment upon thoughts which flash from the eternal mind. You may give your judgment, but the Lord shall reverse it, and time, which is always with truth, will ere long turn the laugh in another direction.

With this rather too long preface about dreaming, I will now confess that, after my own fashion, I, too, have seen a vision; and though you should say of me in days to come, "Behold, this dreamer cometh," yet, as he that hath a dream is bidden to tell his dream, so tell I mine. My dream is this: I have seen in vision missionary spirit in England, now so given to slumber, marvellously quickened, awakened, and revived. I have seen—the wish was father to the sight—I have seen the ardour of our first missionary days return to us; I have seen young men eager for the mission field, and old men and fathers sitting in united council to correct mistakes, to devise new methods, or to strengthen the old ones, so that by any means the great chariot of Christ might roll onwards, and that his victories might be more rapid. I thought that I saw, from one end of England to the other, the Christian church stirred with a deep sense of her duty to the heathen; Christian ministers full of pangs and sorrows on account of dying myriads; Christian men and women universally contributing liberally of their substance, while men fitted for the work pushed forward at the call of the great Lord of the harvest to toil in the great harvest-field. I have seen such a vision. By God's grace, we shall see it a fact! Would to God that the captivity of our Zion might be turned, then

should we be like them that dream; then should our mouth be filled with laughter and our tongue with singing, while the heathen would cry, "The Lord hath done great things for them."

First, this evening, I shall *try to justify my vision, and show that it is by no means unreasonable;* secondly, I shall, in a few words, *elaborate the vision, or give the details of it;* and then, in the third place, as time may suit us, shall endeavour to *promote its realisation.*

I. First, LET US JUSTIFY OUR VISION.

We have dreamed that the missionary spirit was suddenly revived among us, that missions were pushed on with greater ardour, and that God vouchsafed to them a far greater blessing than he has done of late. There have been more incoherent dreams than that in this world, and for this reason—first, *that which we have dreamed of is evidently needed.* Brethren, we are not amongst those who are prepared to croak and complain at the very first difficulty that may arise in a great enterprise, but no man can look upon our own Baptist Mission—and I suppose we are not much worse than others—without feeling that there is a pretty general flagging in missionary interest; and albeit that the funds may not much have fallen off, yet the annual recurrence of a debt, which is far from being welcome, together with other matters, goes to show that missionary zeal needs rekindling. This results partly from the fact that the novelty of the thing has gone off, the work having now been on the anvil for fifty years and more; and partly because we have had few very startling incidents of late to evoke a display of enthusiasm. That the missionary fire exists is certain, for when the recent events in Jamaica acted, as it were, as a refreshing breeze, the embers glowed and flamed anew. It is there, certainly, for the heart of the church is alive; it is there, but it is slumbering, somehow. You who recollect the thundering voice of William Knibb, and the great meetings which would be gathered when some such brethren returned home to tell what God had done amongst the heathen, must feel that you have fallen upon dull, uninteresting days in mission life; when the thing is flat and stale, and when men have reached the dregs of the wine, and the new wine is not in the cluster. Well, then, if it be so, let it be remembered that missionary zeal ought not to flag: if there be any one point in which the Christian church ought to keep its fervour at a white heat, it is concerning missions to the heathens. If there be anything about which we cannot tolerate lukewarmness, it is in the matter of sending the gospel to a dying world. How can we expect in such an enterprise, with difficulties to our poor weakness so insuperable, that we shall ever succeed if any of our strength be left unused? With all we have we are weak enough, but if we send but part of the army to the battle, if we exert but half of our strength, how can we expect that the blessing of God shall rest upon us? Depend upon it, that the flagging of zeal at home acts like a canker abroad, and when the heart of Christianity in England does not throb vigorously, every single limb of the missionary body feels the decline, and there is not a missionary anywhere, from the snows of Labrador to the burning heats of Africa, who is not enervated and injured when the Christian public at home begin to weary in well doing. It needs then, it imperatively needs, that our vision should be made a fact.

We may be excused our vision, because *it is very possible that it may be realised.* It is not a thing too hard to look for. It was far harder work, surely, to have established the mission than it will be most thoroughly and earnestly to revive it. If we will but enquire into what may have been the causes of any decline that exists, we shall not find them, I think, to be very deep, nor to be difficult of remedy; they are but superficial, and a little loving earnestness will soon remove them. Brethren, as a denomination, we are beginning to cluster more closely around our standard. We have been hitherto somewhat scattered over the field, isolated, divided, and therefore weak; but now we feel that our strength must lie, under God, in our unity, and our ranks are closing each man to his brother. We feel the fire of sacred love burning in our hearts, and as we come together, and begin to talk of the difficulties before us in a fraternal spirit, they will all vanish. Lovingly correcting errors, carefully removing excrescences, and boldly advancing, the stone shall be rolled away from the sepulchre before we reach it, or if not in God's name, and by his strength, we will roll it away ourselves; and if there has been a flagging, this very meeting, in which there are young and ardent spirits, shall help to supply the material with which to kindle a fire which shall nevermore grow dim.

More than that—it is not only possible that our dream may become a reality, *but it is very probable;* for so it always has been. If ever God's church has declined for a little while, unexpectedly there has been yielded a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We know not what God has in store. He is great at surprises: his best wine last amazes us all. When the devil is most secure upon his throne, then God springs a mine, and blows his empire into atoms. Just when the wise virgins and the foolish alike have allowed their lamps to burn low, then is the cry heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" and those virgins arise and trim their lamps. So will it be among us. I am hopeful that, in answer to earnest prayer, God will speedily send amongst us a general intensity of desire for the glory of Christ, accompanied by breaking of heart and weeping of eye, for the perishing heathen, and a solemn resolve that, in Jehovah's strength we will spare no pains, and neglect no efforts, by which we may make the gospel known unto the ends of the earth. Yes, a thorough renovation of the missionary society, a resurrection of the mission spirit, and an arousing of our churches, is delightfully probable—it were wretched indeed if it were not so.

One thing more we will say upon this topic, namely, *that such a renewal is solemnly required of us.* What are our personal obligations to the Crucified? What owe we not to the gospel which has delivered us from an eternity of woe, and has guaranteed to us an everlasting career of blessedness? This night, redeemed, regenerated, adopted, justified, sanctified, with your feet upon the rock, a song in your mouth, and your goings established—will you not feel it to be a call from heaven, that you should be in earnest to gather in the Lord's chosen out of all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth? Did our Saviour slumber in his life-work? Was he tardy in his service for our redemption? Then might we grow lax; but if, setting his face to Jerusalem, he panted for the baptism wherein he was to be baptised, and was

straitened until it was accomplished, then he claims of us, according to our measure, the same steadfastness of resolve, and perseverance of purpose, and sacrifice of self. I charge you, young men, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be not slow to spend and be spent for him. All is too little, shall we give him less than all? Fervent services are too poor, shall we be lukewarm? Descend, O heavenly fire, and now inflame us, for less than thy flames cannot enable us to live as live we should!

I will not tarry upon this point. You have already forgiven me my dream.

II. LET US PROCEED TO ELABORATE THE VISION.

I was asked principally to address young men this evening. I am a young man myself, and, therefore, if I utter anything exceedingly visionary, you will observe its justification in the text, "Your young men shall see visions." My dream seemed to take this shape: *In order that missionary work should be reformed, revived, and carried on with energy and with hope of success, it seemed necessary that especially among our young members there should be a revival of intense and earnest prayer, and anxious sympathy with the missionary work.* The power of prayer can never be overrated. They who cannot serve God by preaching, need not regret it if they can be mighty in prayer. The true strength of the church lies there. This is the sinew which moves the arm of omnipotence. If a man can but pray, he can do anything. He that knows how to overcome the Lord in prayer, has heaven and earth at his disposal. There is nothing, man, which thou canst not accomplish if thou canst but prevail with God in prayer. Now, I will not say that we ought to have our prayer meetings for missionary objects more largely attended—everybody knows this, but does everybody try to attend? But I will say this, which is more likely to be forgotten, that it were well if we had settled private seasons of devotion, each of us, especially to intercede with God for the conversion of the heathen. It will be a notable day when the young men of this society say, "Not only will we attend the prayer meetings for this object, but we will, each one, as before the Lord, make it matter of conscience that there shall be at least one hour in the week sacredly hedged around and spent in private prayer for the missionary work." Beneath the banyan tree you will not stand, surrounded by black faces, and telling of Krishnu's Christ; but in your own little room, by the old arm-chair, you will as surely be bringing down showers of blessings upon the heathen by importunate entreaties. Here our old men and our matrons, as well as our young men and maidens, may unite. If it be so, that the entire church shall send up one impassioned, continuous, prevalent cry to God, "O Lord, make bare thine arm for Christ and for his truth!" verily, verily, I say unto you he shall avenge you speedily, though he bear long with you. Your prayers shall come up unto the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and he will reveal the glory of his power.

Next, if our young men who see visions will *follow up their prayers with practical effort, then we shall see in our churches a larger and more efficient staff of collectors and contributors.* We should then find men who would give of their substance as a matter of principle,

tithing themselves, or in other fair proportion, so that the kingdom of Christ should never have an empty exchequer. I speak to some who sit often in this place, who need not to have a word said to them by way of stirring them up to liberality, for I can glory in them in this respect, that they do beyond all that I could expect; but I wish that the same spirit of giving were paramount throughout all the church: that men would give, not because they are asked, nor by way of emulation or compulsion, but because God has given to them, and they recognise their stewardship. A few men in a church may often move the whole to liberality. The example of a few, and those few, perhaps, not the richest, may be contagious to the whole mass; and a few earnest young people especially, may often push right and left, with their proverbial enthusiasm, till they have stirred the inert mass, and constrained the whole body to be liberal to the cause of Jesus Christ.

Up till now my dream has been reasonable, you will say. I will now be more visionary. If we were all praying for missions, and all giving for their support, it might be very well asked of us, "What do ye more than others?" for what Romanist is there who is not zealous for the spread of his religion? What heathen is there who does not give quite as much as any of us give, ay, and a great deal more than we give, to his superstitions? But, supposing next to this, that there should be a number of young men here who know each other very well; young men who have been trained in the same sanctuary, nurtured in the same church, who should meet together to-morrow, or at such other time as shall be convenient, and say to one another, "Now, we are in business, we have just commenced in life, and God is prospering us, more or less; we are taking to ourselves wives; our children are coming around us; but still, we trust we are never going to permit ourselves to be swallowed up in a mere worldly way of living; now, what ought we to do for missions?" And suppose the enquiry should be put, "Is there one amongst us who could devote himself to go and teach the heathen for us? As we, most of us, may not have the ability, or do not feel called to the work, is there one out of twelve of us young men, who have grown side by side in the Sunday-school, who has the ability and who feels called to go? Let us make it a matter of prayer, and when the Holy Ghost saith, 'Separate So-and-So to the work,' then we, the other eleven who remain, will do this—we will say to him, 'Now, brother, you cannot stop at home to make your fortune or to earn a competence; you are now giving yourself up to a very arduous and earnest enterprise, and we will support you; we know you—we have confidence in you; you go down into the pit, we will hold the rope; go forth in connection with our own denominational society, but we will bear the expense year by year among ourselves! Have you faith enough to go trusting that the Lord will provide? Then, we will have faith enough, and generosity enough, to say that your wants shall be our care; you preach for Christ, we will make money for Christ; when you open the Bible for Christ, we will be taking down the shop shutters for Christ; and while you are unfolding the banner of Christ's love, we will be unfolding the calicos, or selling the groceries, and we pledge ourselves always to set aside your portion, because, as our

brother, you are doing our work.'" I wish we had such godly clubs as these—holy confederacies of earnest young men who thus would love their missionary, feel for him, hear from him continually, and undertake to supply his support. Why, on such a plan as that, I should think, they would give fifty times, a hundred times, as much as ever they are likely to give to an impersonal society, or to a man whose name they only know, but whose face they never saw. I wonder whether I shall ever live to see a club of that kind? I wonder whether such a club will ever spring up in the midst of this church, or any of the churches in London? If it shall be so, I shall be glad to have seen a vision of it.

Further, I have dreamed also that there would spring up in our churches a very large number of young men who would count it to be the very highest ambition of their lives to give themselves up to the work of Jesus Christ abroad, and who, seeing that in London, and throughout England, men may hear the gospel if they will, while many of the heathen cannot hear it, like or no, would feel it to be their duty to serve Christ in the foreign field; and I have wondered whether we should have these noble fellows coming by the score, and saying, "Here am I, send me." Then I have considered whether God would pour out enough of the missionary spirit upon these men to make them say, "Well, the missionary society is in debt, and cannot take us: it has enough men to support already; it is doing a good work enough, I will not interfere with it; I do not want to be a burden to any brethren: will you send me out, and let me exercise my faith in God, only having this for my comfort, that you will stand at my back and give me what you can, while I will only draw upon you for what I cannot get for myself"? I wonder whether we shall see fifty or a hundred missionaries within the next year or two leaving our shores, whose passage has been paid, and who will land in some foreign country with just enough about them to keep them till the language has been learned, and who will then, in confidence in God, set about working to support themselves? I set Paul before you, young men. When he preached the gospel at the first, he was a tent-maker, and he earned his own living. Are there no occupations in these days by which a man may earn his living, and yet preach the gospel? It is not the best thing to do—the best thing is for a man to give all his time to his ministry; but if you cannot have the best, you must have the second best. Are there not to be found physicians who, in China and in India, would not only procure a subsistence, but much more, and might proclaim the gospel at the same time? Thank God there is such a thing as a medical mission! Thank God that the profession of medicine has not been behind in sending heroes to the field! But are there no other occupations? Young men, are there no clerkships to be had in India? I find men going out there by scores, to make their fortunes, and ruin their constitutions; and I see

young women going out to get married to Indian settlers almost on speculation. Have we no young men and women who will go across the line, and find their way round the Cape of Good Hope, to preach the gospel, intending to use their commercial pursuits as a means of introduction and support? Surely it must be so. I know that at this present moment there are hundreds of Christian men living along the coasts of South America, especially of the Brazils, and the Argentine Republic, where skilled artisans, engineers, and such like, are in constant request by the government, and I have often hoped to hear that some of these men were originating Christian missions. I have often wondered why more has not been done of that kind. We hear of our young brethren going forth to Morocco, to Algiers, to Turkey, and Egypt—they are in demand in almost every part of the earth, for the young men of England are the very pick and prime of humanity; and the various trades which are connected with machinery are scarcely to be taught except by their means. What about their faith if they do not become evangelists? O young men and women, what grand opportunities must open up before some of you! I am sure they must, and if you did but set your hearts to it with a full resolve that you would not live the dead-and-alive life of most of us, but would distinguish yourselves in Christ's service, what might you not achieve! If there were a will, there would be a way; and if there were a fixed purpose, God would send the means; and he who quickened you to such a degree of spiritual life that you could not rest unless you were telling the gospel to the ungodly, would not let his providence so go athwart his grace as to shut the door in your face when you were willing to be serviceable to his cause.

"That is a dream," says one. Well, may some of you dream it, and in the midst of the dream may there rise up before you a face which, as it shall by degrees settle and become clear, and you shall discern its features, shall be wonderfully like your own, and as you wake may you have to say, "Here am I, Lord, send me, for whithersoever thou wouldst have me go, there will I go, to proclaim the name and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh! when shall I see once again the missionary going from door to door, determined, according to his Master's command, that whatsoever things they set before him he will eat, believing that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that he is to expect to find his hire amongst those to whom he preaches the gospel; believing that the acceptance of hospitality is the master-key of missions, and that the eating of the strangers' salt is the nearest way to put before them the bread of life, and the reception of hospitable courtesy the very stepping-stone towards the giving out of the precious gospel? May we live to see this! We shall, by God's grace, if his Spirit visits us.

III. Lastly, and but very briefly, what shall we do to assist THE REALISATION OF THIS VISION?

We can all do something if we love the Lord, and that something will be eminently a blessing to ourselves. If ever we are to see the missionary spirit brought to its very highest and most perfect condition, *it must be by each individual's own personal piety mounting to the very highest degree of elevation.* Why, we are not half saints—we seem, many of us, to forget what sainthood means; we are content to be just saved, like the drowning man dragged to shore just alive, and that is all. O that we were not satisfied with this, but that our love to Christ were flaming, our hope in Jesus Christ bright and clear, our faith in God firm and unstaggering. O that we served Christ, not at a snail's pace, but with the utmost energy of the best conditioned manhood. O that we loved Christ and worked for Christ up to the last ounce at which the engine could be driven! O that we could but just for once see what manhood could do when God was in it. O that some of us were raised up to be as Brainerd, living, dying, through love to Christ; men who were conquered by divine love, led in fetters as slaves to the blessed captivity of love to the souls of men. May it grow into a passion with you, men and women, to snatch fire-brands from the flame! You will never be very useful until it is so. If holy work be a mere diversion for your leisure moments, you will do nothing; you must make a trade of it, a solemn occupation of it. It must be your calling, your meat, and your drink, to do the will of him that sent you. When the Christian church glows in this fashion, it will swell with an intense heat like a volcano, whose tremendous furnaces cannot be contained within itself, but its sides begin to move and bulge, and then after a rumbling and a heaving, a mighty sheet of fire shoots right up to heaven, and afterwards streams of flaming lava run from its red lips down, burning their way along the plain beneath. Oh! to get such a fire for God's cause into the heart of the Christian church, till she began to heave and throb with unquenchable emotion, and then a mighty sheet of the fire-prayer should go up towards heaven, and afterwards the burning lava of her all-conquering zeal should flow over all lands, till all nations should enquire, "What is this new thing in the earth, and what this modern miracle, and what this cross of Christ for which men live and die?"

I would say, as subsidiary to this great thing—which is the main matter-to-night—*that young men and young women would do well to feed the flame of their zeal with greater information as to the condition of the world in reference to our mission-work.* I wish that those who supply us with our periodical missionary literature had any idea of the great difficulty there is in keeping awake while reading it. I should be glad if they could by any means put a small allowance of salt into it, or

serve it up in a more tempting form. I do not plead for making it into light literature, far from it, but if our editors could anyhow give us something that would tempt the literary or the spiritual palate, it would be well. But, young men, you are not dependent upon periodical literature—I almost regret that there is such a thing—there are solid books to be got at. There are libraries teeming with the works of missionaries—their travels, their adventures; the history of heathen nations—their desolations, their wants, their crimes, their idolatries, their infamies. There is a great literature for you. You may not have time to get through it all, but if you read some of it, I think you will feel a great accession to your zeal.

When you have gained such information, which may be as fuel to the fire, I pray you *keep yourselves right in this matter by constant, energetic efforts in connection with works at home.* Those who do not serve God at home, are of no use anywhere. It is all very well to talk about what you would do if you could speak to the Hindoos. Nonsense! what do you do when you are in the streets of Whitechapel? You will be of no use whatever in Calcutta, unless you are of use in Poplar or Bermondsey. The human mind is the same everywhere. Its sins may take another form, but there are just the same difficulties in one place as in another. It is all very well for you to turn a sort of Don Quixote in imagination, and dream of what you would do if you went out upon a spiritual crusade as a heavenly knight-errant, tilting against windmills; just try your hand at the conversion of that young man who sits next you in the pew. See what you can do for Jesus Christ in the shop. See whether you can serve your Master in that little Bible-class of which you are a member. Rest assured that no missionary ardour really burns in the breast of that man who does not love the souls of those who live in the same house and dwell in the same neighbourhood. Give me that man for a missionary of whom it is said, that when he took a lodging in a house, all the other inhabitants were brought to God within six months; or he was a son, and his father was unconverted, but he gave the Lord no rest till he saw his parent saved; or he was a tradesman, and while he was pushing his business earnestly, he always found time to be an evangelist. That is the man who will maintain missionary fervour alive at home, and that is the man who will help to promote missionary effort abroad.

Brethren and sisters, these are the practical points: have a higher degree of piety, a wider and more extensive knowledge, and a more practical zeal in God's work near to your hand.

But oh! do make sure that you are saved yourselves. Do make sure that you yourselves know the Christ whom you profess to teach. That missionary-box, what is it but an infamous sham if you put into it your offering, but withhold your heart? You talk about missionary

collecting, missionary meetings, lectures to the young, and I know not what, when you yourself are a stranger to the power of vital godliness! No, my dear friend; begin at home. May the Lord begin with you. O young men, young women, are you yet unsaved? Then instead of your pitying the heathen, the heathen may well pity you! How might a heathen with a tender heart stand here and say, "If that Bible be true, if that gospel which you talk of has really come from God, if Christ be the Saviour, if there be no salvation out of him, then how I pity you who have heard about it and yet have rejected it! How I pity you, because your own Saviour, whom you profess to serve, out of his own mouth of love has said it, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for you!" Oh! then, let it be to-night that you give your heart to God, and when you have given your heart to him, then think of the matter of which I have spoken.

God grant that my vision may become a fact. May you help to make it so, and Christ shall have the glory. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke x. 1—21.

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Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

MARAH; OR, THE BITTER WATERS SWEETENED.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 23RD, 1871, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet."—Exodus xv. 23, 24, 25.

WHAT a sudden change from the sound of the timbrel to the voice of murmuring! You saw the maidens dancing three days ago, and you little dreamed that they would make part of yonder clamorous throng who surround the servant of God, and cry, "What shall we drink?" Such are the changes of our outward conditions and of our inward feelings; so fickle and so mutable is man. What is there that can be rested upon in this mortal life? We say to-day, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved;" to-morrow, *terra firma* there is none, and we are tossed upon a stormy sea. Our life is like an April day, the sunshine alternates with the shower; or like each day of all the year, the morning and the evening are needful to complete it. Quick on the heels of light treads the darkness, followed with equal haste by light again. The sun's rule, at this golden hour, is but temporary; he must abdicate in favour of the usurping stars, but they, in their turn, must give way before his lordly presence yet again. This world, which is our inn, owns to the sign of the "Chequers"—the blacks and whites are everywhere. We can be sure of nothing between here and heaven of the things which are seen; but of this we may be certain, that underneath all the outward change there is the immutable love of God towards his people, and that, after all, the change lies only in the seeming things, not in the things which truly are; for the things which are not seen are eternal and changes come not there; it is but in the things which are seen that the change occurs. Let us set the less store by earth, because its fashion abides not. Let us prize heaven more, because it cannot fade.

I. The text directs your attention, first of all, to THE EVILS OF THE WILDERNESS. We need not spend much time in thinking of these evils, because they throw themselves in our way often enough; and the tendency of our mind is unduly to exaggerate them. Notice that the

perils and trials of the wilderness occur *very early in the pilgrim life.* It is a notion, I have no doubt, of very young Christians who still have the shell upon their heads and are scarce hatched, that their trials are over now that they have become winged with faith; they had far better have reckoned that their trials have begun with tenfold force, now that they are numbered with the servants of the Most High. Whatever else comes not to thee, O servant of God, this will surely be fulfilled, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" Some privileges are not common to all the adopted, but the privilege of chastisement is universal to all true sons. It is the token of bastardy if the rod be escaped, but scourging is the sure pledge of paternal love. I say, however, that these trials come very soon. Israel was no sooner across the Red Sea than they went three days into the wilderness of Shur, but found no water; and on the third day, when they did arrive at a fountain, they found worse than no water, for it was so brackish, so altogether unfit for drinking, that though they thought they would have drunk anything, they could not possibly drink this. What, in three days, must they that sang unto the Lord because he triumphed gloriously, nauseate the water for which their thirst makes them pant? In three days shall they be reduced to such straits that they must drink or die, and yet feel that they should die if they were to drink of such nauseous streams? Ah yes, with some of us our delight at conversion was very great, our exhilaration at finding the Saviour was something never to be forgotten, and yet only a day or so after we were stumbled with great temptation, amazed at the discovery of the evil of our hearts, or tried by the coldness of our fellow Christians, or the cruelty of the outside world, so that we found we had come to Marah. And this was all the severer trial, because some of us had found a degree of pleasure in the ways of sin, and now it stumbled us to find sorrow in the ways of God. When Israel was in Egypt, they drank of the river Nile. No ordinary water that. To this day the dwellers on the banks of the Nile assert that the water has a peculiar taste not to be discovered in any other stream, and they prefer the waters of the Nile to all the waters in the world besides. What a change from the sweetness of the Nile to the bitterness of Marah! Did not the suggestion rise in their hearts, "It was better with us in the bondage of Egypt, with water in abundance, than it is now in the liberty of the wilderness with the bitterness of Marah?" The devil tempted some of us at the very first by saying: "See what you have got by being a Christian. While you were as others are, your mind had mirth; now you have come out and followed the Crucified, you have lost the liveliness of your spirits, the brightness of your wit—that which made life worth having is taken away from you." Young Christian, is that your case to-day? Be not stumbled, neither believe the enemy. Man, it were better to die at Marah free, than live a slave by the sweet Nile. Even men that know not the Spirit of God have felt it were better to die free than live slaves, and truly to be a slave to Satan is so degrading a thing, that if this mouth were for ever filled with Marah's bitterness, yet were it better to be so than to be enchanted with the pleasures of sin. Yet these early trials are very severe, and need much grace lest they cause us great mischief.

Secondly, these evils *assume varied shapes*. You noticed that for the first three days in the wilderness they found no water; that is one trial. But the next day, or at the end of the third day, they found water. Now they thought their trial was over: alas! it had only changed its shape. They found water, but it was too bitter to drink. Do not be in a hurry to change your trials, dear friends. We have heard of some who have repined that they had no children, and, like Rachel, their cry was, "Give me children, or else I die." Ere long they have had children who proved to be far worse than none. Better no son than an Absalom. We have known those who were in good health, but discontented because they had no wealth; they have gained wealth at last, but with an injured constitution, they have had no power to enjoy it. If we could choose our trials, we might well remember the wisdom of the old philosopher, who told the people oppressed by a tyrant to be content with his tyranny, "for," said he, "it is with oppressors as with mosquitoes, let those suck which are now upon you, for if you drive those off, the fresh ones which will succeed them will be hungrier than those that are there now: better be content with the tyranny you have, than seek a new one." It is much the same with the trials we now feel; you will get used to them by degrees: they will spend their force. Desire for a change of trials may only be a wish for a worse affliction, for whether was the worse, to have no water, or to have the water and to find it so bitter that you could not drink it?

Yet when God changes the trial be well satisfied that it should be changed. You may anticipate, Christian, that you will have your trial changed: indeed, you must reckon that it is so. I mean, that if to-day it is smooth sailing with you, though yesterday waves rolled mountains high, it is only a change of trial; you are now tried by prosperity, which may prove to be a more severe test for you than adversity. Is the wind balmy, blows it from the south? Is it but another trial for thee, be sure of that, for they who have withstood the northern blast and grown the ruddier and stronger for its influence, have often grown faint and weary under softer airs. Watch thou in all things, thy trials are with thee constantly; the crucible is changed, the fire still burns.

Note again, that as the trials of the wilderness came soon, and assumed various shapes, so often do the trials of the Christian *touch very vital matters*. They found no water, or finding it, it was bitter. It is not said they found no wine—a small trial indeed; it is not said they found no milk, yet might the infant children have been sorely troubled by such a want; but they found no drinkable water. Here was a denial of an essential of life. They must have water, it was no luxury, it was a necessity; with the hot, burning sand beneath them reflecting the fierce heat of a cruel sun, not to have water in the wilderness is to feel an urgent necessity producing a terrible pain. God may touch us, and probably has done so or will, in points most vital. To be tried in the loss of some of your superfluities, my brethren, is but little; but to lose even the little that you had to live upon, to be brought to straitness of bread, this is real tribulation. To have the hand put forth to touch your bone and your flesh, this is affliction. Believe me, our virtues and graces look very fine, and we think much of them until they undergo that ordeal, but that test

often takes from them their gloss and beauty; we find how great our weakness is when the very marrow of our bones seems to be a den in which pains, like robbers, hide themselves. God may touch you in the most beloved object of your heart. It is not one child that is taken out of many, but the only one; it is not a friend, or distant relative, but the partner of your bosom is laid low. Do not wonder if the trial affects you greatly, and comes home to your soul and heart. It is one of God's determinations that trials shall not be mock trials with his servants, and the grace given shall not be imaginary, but true. God never plays at chastening his children. No trial for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. By the blueness of the wound the heart is made better; if it do not bruise, it doth not benefit. Very much in proportion to the bitterness felt will be the benefit that will come of it. They found no water. O my God, to what straits dost thou reduce thine own people; thine own people who carry with them the title-deeds of a land that flows with milk and honey! Jordan and Kishon are theirs, and yet they find only Marah to drink while they are here; thine own people for whom thou hast appointed that they shall dwell in a land of brooks and rivers of water, where they shall sit every man under his vine and fig-tree; these, thy darlings, whom thou hast brought out with a high hand and an outstretched arm, are brought to the extreme of poverty, and the little that they have has often a bitter taste infused into it.

Notice once again, there is *a reason why the earthly mercies which supply our necessities must be more or less bitter.* When Israel received water out of the rock it was not bitter, but this water came out of the sand. To this day in the desert water is found in different places, but where it oozes up from a sandy bed it is almost without exception so brackish and bitter, by reason of the sand, that it is not fit for human drinking; and even the camels, unless they are sore pressed, turn away from it with great aversion. The sand has tainted it, the flavour of earth has got into the blessing. So it is with most of our blessings; by reason of our sin and infirmity too much of the flavour of earth enters into the gift of heaven. Our common mercies, when we receive them direct from heaven as God gives them, are mercies indeed—cool, flowing streams that gush from the rock of his favour; but we are so apt to trace them to the creature, so ready to look upon them as derived from earth instead of coming from heaven; and just in that proportion may we expect to find bitterness in them. What can you hope for in a wilderness, but productions congruous to it? Canaan! who looks for bitterness there? Is it not the land that flows with milk and honey? Sweet land, when shall we reach thee? Thy sweetness is but congruous to thyself. But here, in this wilderness, where we have no continuing city, who looks for the streams of Lebanon? who hopes to find Canaan's fruits in the wilderness of Sin? As well seek to gather from the briny sea the sweet fruits of the palm or the luscious clusters of the vine, as hope to find, amidst these changing scenes, comforts that shall be all comfortable and joys that shall be all joyous. No, they will be comforts, but they will be often embittered; they will be joyous somewhat, but the earthy flavour in them will make us remember that this is not our rest.

I know not that I ought to detain you longer with these evils of the

wilderness. I do not feel it is wrong to speak of them, for we do not mention them with any view of discouraging those who have set out on pilgrimage; we are not like those who hold up their hands and say, "The lions, the giants, the dragons; young pilgrim, you will never reach the land of promise;" but yet we would imitate the Saviour, who said to the follower who thought he could follow him whithersoever he might go, "Sit down, and count the cost." There are trials for you, ye followers of Christ, if there are none for others—peculiar trials for you, peculiar joys ten thousand times outweighing them, but yet peculiar griefs, new griefs of a new life of which it will be a blessed thing to have been a participant; but there they are, and we will not deceive you. For you there will be Marahs that others may not know, and for you there will be long thirsts where others drink to the full; nevertheless, we will take Christ and his reproach, Christ and his Marah, rather than the world with its sweetness, for with every drawback that is supposable to Christ Jesus, he is better than the world with all the additions that can be invented by the sons of mirth.

II. Thus much on the first point, the evils of the wilderness. Now, secondly, THE TENDENCY OF HUMAN NATURE. The people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Do not say "human nature," says one; say, "the tendency of Jewish nature." Ah, but if anything, I would prefer the people in the wilderness to any other: rest assured that they were no worse than we are. They are an example to us of what our heart is; and whatever we see in them we have but to watch a little, and we shall see it all in ourselves. It was not Jewish nature that God proved in the wilderness so much as human nature at its very best estate. Assuredly, the tendency of human nature is to murmur. They murmured, complained, found fault. A very easy thing, for the very word "murmur," how simple it is, made up of two infantile sounds—*mur mur*. No sense in it, no wit in it, no thought in it: it is the cry rather of a brute than of a man—*murmur*—just a double groan. Easy is it for us to kick against the dispensations of God, to give utterance to our griefs, and what is worse, to the inference we drew from them that God has forgotten to be gracious. To murmur is our tendency; but, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, do we mean to let the tendencies of the old nature rule us? Will we murmur? O that we might have grace rather to say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" Shall a living man complain? Have we not received so much good from the hands of the Lord that we may well receive evil without rebellion? Will we not disappoint Satan, and overrule the tendency of the flesh, by saying in the might of God's Spirit, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." I know we are apt to say, "Well, that is human nature," and when we have said it is human nature, we suppose we have given a very excellent excuse for doing it. But is human nature to rule the divine nature? You, believer, profess to be a partaker of the divine nature. Let the superior force govern, let that which cometh from above be uppermost, and put the lower nature down; let us eschew murmurings and complainings, and magnify and adore the God who lays our comforts low

Observe—and this is worthy of note—that the murmuring was not ostensibly against God. They murmured against Moses. And have you ever noticed how the most of us, when we are in a murmuring vein, are not honest enough to murmur distinctly against God. No: the child is dead, and we form a conjecture that there was some wrong treatment on the part of nurse, or surgeon, or ourselves; we lay our hold on that for which there may not be a shadow of proof, and the murmuring is upon that point. Or we have lost money, and have been brought down from opulence to almost poverty; then some one person was dishonest, a certain party betrayed us in a transaction by failing to fulfil his part; all the murmuring is heaped on that person. We deny, perhaps indignantly, that we murmur against God; and to prove it we double the zeal with which we murmur against Moses. To complain of the second cause is about as sensible as the conduct of the dog, which bites the stick with which it is beaten. It owes no anger to the stick, but to the person who uses it. Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it? Whoever is the instrument, the Lord overrules. In our heart of hearts our rebellion is against the Lord himself. We have not quite honesty enough to rail against God openly and avowedly, and so we hypocritically cover up our repining against him by murmuring against some person, occasion, or event. "If I had not happened to go out on such an occasion I might not have had that cold and been laid aside." Thus we blame an accidental circumstance, as if it were not part of the divine arrangement. Is this complaining of the second cause better than railing against God? I trow not, for, in very deed, it is railing against God, and it is, in addition, an injustice to the second cause, so made a butt of. When Pharaoh bade the Israelites make bricks, and gave them no straw, there was injustice; but when the Israelites gathered around Moses and virtually told him that he ought to supply them with water, it was much the same thing. Whence should this man have water to give them to drink? How could he sweeten Marah? They knew right well that it was not possible for him to open a well for them in the wilderness; they complained, I say, in their hearts, really against God, but they added to this the hypocrisy and the injustice of veiling their murmuring against the Most High by an unjust and clamourous complaint against his servant Moses. Stop thy tongue, my brother; cease thy cavilling against this and that, against him or her; for be sure that thou art doing injustice to thy fellowman as well as a wrong to thy God.

Once more, while we speak of this tendency in human nature, I want you to observe how they betrayed an utter unbelief of God. They said unto Moses, "What shall we drink?" They meant by it, "By what means can God supply our want of water?" What a question! They were at the Red Sea, and God cleft the intervening gulf in twain, through the depths thereof they marched dryshod; there is Marah's water—shall it be more difficult for God to purify than to divide? To sweeten a fountain—is that more difficult than to cleanse a sea? Is anything too hard for the Lord? A great miracle had been wrought; had they but considered it, and exercised even the lowest degree of faith, they must have seen that he who could work such a miracle as they had seen could work yet another; and they might joyously have stood at

Marah's brink, and have sung, "He who cast Pharaoh and his chosen captains into the Red Sea, and delivered his people, can give his chosen drink; therefore sing we, Spring up, O well, and let thy waters be sweet and clean." O that they had faith in God but as a grain of mustard seed, and they would have seen great things, and glorified his name. Do you blame them? Do so; blame them much, but include yourselves in the censure. How often has it been so with us? We have said, "I will never distrust my God after this memorable deliverance, this singular display of his power has slain my unbelief;" yet a new trial has occurred, and our faith, where was it? Had the Son of Man himself been on the earth with those quick eyes to discern the faith which he himself creates, could he find faith in us in the hour of tribulation? Be humbled as ye see yourselves in this mirror. Behold your instability, which is as water. How like to reeds shaken with the wind are we; or like to meteors, which flash across the brow of night, to leave the darkness denser than before. How soon is the glory of our confidence spent, and the excellence of our faith withered. Hold thou our feet in life, great God, or we shall soon be silent in darkness.

III. Now, thirdly—and may divine help, the help of the Holy Ghost be given me—I will speak upon THE REMEDY OF GRACE. I have shown you the evils of the wilderness and the tendency of nature: it is delightful to behold the remedy of grace. First, if thou wouldst have Marah's bitterness healed, *take the case in prayer to God.* God begins by making us begin. The people complained to Moses; Moses took the complaint to his Master. In all trials, the surest way to a remedy is prayer. In heavenly pharmacy, prayer is a *catholicon;* it healeth all things. Prayer, which overcomes heaven, will certainly never be overmatched on earth. Neither men nor devils can stand against prayer: it smites them hip and thigh like another Samson. The bow of prayer returns not empty; it is swifter than an eagle, it is stronger than a lion. Take thy case to God, O heir of trouble; unroll Rabshakeh's letter before the Most High, and the Lord will silence his revilings. Half the work is done when it is brought before God in supplication.

Note, next, that *as soon as we have a prayer God has a remedy.* The remedy is near at hand; but we do not perceive it till it is shown us. "The Lord showed him a tree." The tree had been growing for years on purpose to be used. God has a remedy for all our troubles before they happen to us. A delightful employment it is to notice how God forestalls himself; how long before we reach the encampment, if there be the bitter well, there is also the healing tree. All is ready between here and heaven. He that has gone to prepare a place for us by his presence, has prepared the way to that place for us by his providence. But, brethren, though for every trouble in this mortal life there is a remedy, you and I do not always discern it. "The Lord showed him a tree." I am persuaded that for every lock in Doubting Castle there is a key, but the promises are often in great confusion to our minds, so that we are perplexed. If a blacksmith should bring you his great bundle of picklocks, you would have to turn them over, and over, and over; and try half of them, perhaps two-thirds, before you would find the right one; ay, and perhaps the right one would be left to the last. It is always a blessing to remember that for every affliction there is a

promise in the word of God; a promise which meets the case, and was made on purpose for it. But you may not be always able to find it —no, you may go fumbling over the Scriptures long before you get the true word; but when the Lord shows it to you, when it comes with power to the soul, when the heart can grasp it, and cry, "Ay, that is the word, my Master; indeed and of a truth that is the precious truth which can sweeten my sad discomforts," oh, what a bliss it is! All glory be unto the Holy Ghost, who to this day is ever ready to show unto his praying servants the sweetening tree when they come to the bitter streams.

Now that remedy for the healing of Marah's water was *a very strange one.* Why should a tree sweeten the waters? I do not suppose there was any natural efficacy in the tree, although that would not be altogether impossible, since there are trees, so travellers tell us, which have been used in the sweetening of waters. There is in South Africa a certain river, which water cannot be drunk until branches of a certain tree are placed in it, and then the bitterness which is in the stream is deposited at the bottom, and the water becomes drinkable. The thing is not unnatural nor altogether necessarily supernatural, though I think in this case it was supernatural, for there are no trees found now in the wilderness of Shur that would have the effect of sweetening brackish waters. This was no doubt a miraculous incident, and it was also meant to teach us something. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was eaten by our first parents and embittered all; there is a tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Blessed is he that eats of this tree of life; it shall take away from him the bitterness which the first forbidden fruit brought into the world. A tree is a living thing: may we not learn that there are living principles in true religion which will sweeten our adversities? Mere doctrines may not, but living principles will; these cast into our troubles will assuage our grief.

Best of all, may not this tree cut down be an emblem of the Saviour? A glorious tree indeed was he, with spreading branches, and top reaching to heaven—but he must suffer the axe for our sakes; and now, to-day, contemplating his atoning sacrifice, and by faith resting in him, the troubles of life and the troubles of death are sweetened by his dear cross, which, though it be a bitter tree in itself, is the antidote for all the bitterness that comes upon us here and hereafter.

That remedy was most effective. When they cut down the tree, and put it into the water, it turned the water sweet—they could drink of it; and let me assure you, that in the case of our trouble, the cross is a most effective sweetener. Shall I put the tree into the water for a minute, and then ask you to drink? Have you been suffering pain, or any other form of tribulation? I will lay the cross asoak in it for a minute, and your first reflection will be—"In all this that I am called to suffer there is not even a single particle of punishment for my sin: God has punished Christ, consequently he cannot punish me: to punish two for one offence would be unjust, therefore there is nothing penal in all that I am suffering." I do not know of any reflection more consoling than this, that my sorrow is not laid on me by a judge, nor inflicted on me as the result of divine anger. There is not a drop of

wrath in a riverful of a believer's grief. Does not that take the bitterness out of affliction and make it sweet? And then the reflection goes further. Since Christ has died for me, I am God's dear child; and now if I suffer, all my suffering comes from my Father's hand—nay, more, from my Father's heart. He loves me, and therefore makes me suffer; not because he does not love, but because he does love does he thus afflict me. In every stripe I see another token of paternal love. This it is to sweeten Marah's waters indeed.

Then will come the next reflection—that a Father's love is joined with infinite wisdom, and that, therefore, every ingredient in the bitter cup is measured out drop by drop, and grain by grain, and there is not one pang too many ever suffered by an heir of heaven. The cross is not only weighed to the pound but to the ounce, ay, to the lowest conceivable grain. You shall not have one half a drop of grief more than is absolutely needful for your good and God's glory. And does not this also sweeten the cross, that it is laid on us by infinite wisdom, and by a Father's hand?

Ravishing, indeed, is the reflection in the midst of all our grief and suffering, that Jesus Christ suffers with us. In all thine affliction, O member of the body, the Head is still a sharer. Deep are the sympathies of the Redeemer, acute, certain, quick, infallible; he never forgets his saints.

All the while the Lord lays his chastening hand upon his servants they may be cheered by this reflection, that in this he is making them conformable unto Christ. What should they know of Gethsemane if they had no sweat of pain? What should they know of the passion if they never had to cry, "I thirst," or "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" They were poor scholars in the school of Christ's sufferings if they endured no sufferings themselves; and it is a blessed thing, a sweet thing to drink of his cup, and to be baptised with his baptism.

Moreover, when the child of God is in his right state, it is always enough for him that his condition is the result of his Father's will. Is it God's will? Is it Christ's will? Then it is my will. How could I dare to wish anything to be otherwise than divine love appoints?

I do not know but what it will become sometimes to the Christian a subject of joy that Marah is bitter. For suppose Marah had been sweet, then, Moses had not prayed to God, and then the tree had not been cut down, and they had never known the power of God to sweeten bitter waters. It must be an awful thing to live an unafflicted life on earth. You say it must be a very delightful thing. I have no doubt it may be from some aspects; but a person who has had no sickness, how can he have a sympathetic heart? What service can he render in cheering the people of God? If you never had any trials, I should suppose, unless something very extraordinary happened, that you would become harsh, and untender; I am afraid some would grow brutal, coarse, hard of heart. Who wishes, where others have to suffer, to claim an immunity from a blessing which brings rich consolations with it, and works eternal benefits? Beloved, this is ever one thing that sweetens Marah that it afterwards bringeth forth the comfortable fruits of righteousness. Our trials are not sent to us alone and by

themselves; there is a *quantum suff.* of grace sent with them, by which they are made available as means to sanctify us, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

I will not keep you much longer upon this point, but I must notice, that while I have shown you that the remedy is very efficacious, it is something more than efficacious: *it is transcendant.* The water was bitter, but it became absolutely sweet. The same water that was bitter became sweet, and the grace of God, by leading us into contemplations that spring out of the cross of Christ, can make our trials themselves to become pleasant to us. It is a triumph of grace in the heart when we not only acquiesce in trouble, but even rejoice in it. "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." It is a grand thing when we can truly say that as to the rod of the covenant we would not escape it if we might. It becomes in the judgment of wisdom so good a thing to be tried, that though we would not seek it, yet we accept it with something more than readiness, and the bitter thing becomes sweet to us.

Let me say, and have done with this part of the subject, that the remedy which is suggested to us by a spiritualizing of text, is efficacious for all trials, and will be found especially so for the bitter waters of death at the last. With all that can be said about death it is not a pleasant subject for contemplation, and needs to be viewed in connection with covenant consolations. Certain brethren buoy themselves up with the hope of escaping death by the second Advent. I am not certain that they are wiser than David who did not hope to omit the valley of the shadow of death, but trusted that he should fear no evil therein, because the rod and staff would be his stay. The death of Christ robs death of its terrors. The prospect of the resurrection and the certainty of immortality make us say, "Surely the bitterness of death is past!"

Be it remembered, that if the cross avails to sweeten all the bitterness of our mortal life, and even the last bitterness of death, it is assuredly available this morning to sweeten the bitterness of our present sorrow. Did you drink the quassia-cup this morning before you came here? Do you feel desponding at this moment, my brother, my sister? Go to your Saviour at once, view him suffering on your behalf, behold the completion of your reconciliation to God, mark the security of your soul through the finished work of your glorious Surety, take down your harps from the willows, put away your ashes, ask the Lord to anoint you with the oil of joy instead of mourning, and even at the waters of Marah lift up your song again, and let the timbrel still be heard. "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: Marah's bitterness hath he turned to sweetness, he hath cut down the mighty tree which he gave for us, and which yielded itself to the axe for us, and into the bitter stream the tree is cast, and now henceforth, O Marah, thou art sweet indeed." Did you come here this morning as Naomi when she returned to her city and said, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Ah, when she dandled on her knee and held in her fond bosom the child of Ruth and Boaz, the joy of her old age, she was glad to think the neighbours had not changed her name, and she was willing enough to be

called Naomi still. Call not yourself Marah, but remember the new name which the Lord hath named upon you. The bitter pool itself call it not Marah; be not so ready to affix names of sad memorials, your griefs are apt enough to gall your memory; do not aid them to sting you. Call the well by another name; forget Marah, and remember Jehovah Rophi, the Lord that healeth both thee and the waters. Record the mercy rather than the sorrow, and give thanks unto the Most High.

Now, in closing, somebody will say, "This is a very curious missionary sermon." Yes, but you see I did not appoint the missionary sermon for to-day: my brethren did that, and certainly I did not arrange my own sickness, so as to make it fall on this day. How can I dance to the sound of the timbrel when I am feeble and sad? If I had the choosing of my own state of health and mind, I would have the choosing of my own texts, and make them always suitable to the occasions as they arise; but I am obliged to preach what I can preach, and as I know pretty well the flavour of Marah, and a little about the sweetness which the healing tree can give it, I can only tell you what I know by experience.

But it is a good missionary sermon for all that. Let us show you how. Here is A SUGGESTION OF COMPASSION.

Brethren, all the world over, the heathen have trials, bitternesses, woes. I said that Christians have peculiar woes, but the dark places of the earth have direr sorrows. Some nations are devastated with war; others are tormented with diabolical customs and rites: their actions even towards themselves through their superstition are brutal. I may well liken the world that lieth in darkness to a thirsty caravan gathered around Marah's well where the water is too bitter to drink. Oh, the woes, the woes of mankind! High are the Andes, lofty the Himalayas, but the woes of the sons of Adam are higher, huger still. The Ganges and the Indus, and other mighty streams, pour their floods into the ocean; but what mighty deep could contain the torrents of human grief? A very deluge is the sorrow as well as the sin of man. And, my brethren, the heathen know nothing of the healing tree, the tree cut down of old, which still hath power to sweeten mortal misery. You know it, you have your trials, and you surmount them by the appeals you make to your Lord, and by the power of his consolations; but alas! these sons of darkness have your griefs, and more, but they have not your Comforter. For them the deluge, but not the ark; for them the tempest, but not the refuge. And you are so sure that you have that which would cheer them: no doubt passes across your mind as to the gospel. These are wavering times in which some professors, and even some teachers, almost believe, that the gospel is but one theory of many, and will have to stand its test, and, in all probability, will fail as many human systems of thought have done. You think not so; you believe that God's gospel is a verity, a revelation of Jehovah. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not his word, his Christ, his decree, his covenant. You know that you have a tree that can heal the bitter fountains. No doubt comes across your mind as to that: what then? By common humanity, much more by the tender movements of the grace of God upon your souls, I conjure

you present this remedy to those who need it, and who need it so much. Will anything suffice as a substitute for it? Is there anywhere on earth another healing tree beside that which fell beneath the axe at Calvary? Are there other leaves for the healing of the nations? On the seven-hilled city of Rome, grows there a tree that can heal man's diseases? No; it is a deadly upas. Cut it down, and burn the very roots thereof. Amongst the fancies of idolatry are there any inventions of man that can cool his fevered brow and sooth his griefs? Does Mohammedanism offer hopes for eternity that can light up the grave to an awakened sinner? Are there thoughts of bliss in idolatry calculated to cheer the sepulchre? All religions answer, "Comforts are not in us." It is only at the cross, it is only by Jesus crucified that the world can be healed. Hitherto little has been accomplished compared with our desires; and in contrast to our ambitions, next to nothing; but faith, darting beyond the things that are seen, flying into the presence-chamber of God, can behold him writing with the eternal pen, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God;" and she is sure that the tree will sweeten the waters yet. Come, brethren, let your faith prove itself by your works. Help to-day—to-day, by your gifts; help to-morrow—to-morrow, by your prayers. Help, some of you, by consecrating yourselves to mission labour. There is a prayer I mean to continue to offer until it is answered, that God would pour out on this church a missionary spirit. I want to see our young men devoting themselves to the work, some that will not be afraid to venture and preach Jesus Christ in the regions beyond. I have not much faith in missionary societies; it gets less, I must protest, each year; yet we must never put aside one instrumentality until we have a better ready. If the Lord would send, the living fire through the churches of England, if he would send from on high a divine impulse, we should see starting up here and there men who would say: "Here are we: send us." The Spirit of God will say, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work," and when this is done I look to see far happier days.

We have sweetened the waters a little; no more the suttee burns; the African is free; the slave-ship crosses no more the deep. In some regions exterminating wars have ceased; the white dove of peace flies where the raven of war was seen. Glory be to God. A few leaves cast into the waters have done this. Let us bear a whole Christ and a whole gospel amongst the nations, and lay the tree in this Marah, until at last the whole world shall drink of the sweet waters of divine love, and God shall be all in all. God bless you, beloved, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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THE CRY OF THE HEATHEN.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 25TH, 1858. BY THE

REV. C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."—Acts xvi. 9.

THIS was no doubt a special vision sent of God for the direction of the apostle. For we are told in the next verse, that they assuredly gathered from this vision, that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia. And yet the vision may be very readily accounted for by natural causes. Men usually dream of that which is most upon their minds. Who would marvel that the miser should, in his restless sleep, be pictured to his own sight as counting over his gold? Who wonders that the mother's dream is often concerning her fair infant? Who marvels that the wife frequently dreams of shipwrecks, when, in the stormy night, she lies upon her bed, her last thoughts having been exercised concerning her husband at sea? You wonder not that the soldier in the trenches dreams of battle. And hence we cannot marvel that the apostle Paul, whose whole soul was full of his Master's cause, should have a vision in the night concerning a new field of labour, which God had intended to open up to him. You will remember that the apostle was, on this occasion, in a peculiar condition. He at first endeavoured to preach the gospel in Phrygia and Galatia, but he was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. And "after they had come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not." The apostle was like Abraham of old; he went forth, not knowing whither he went. There was a certain path which he must take, and when he strove to turn either to the right hand or to the left, the Spirit directly forbade him, and he was compelled to go on till he came to the sea-port of Troas. There, wearied with his journey, he cast himself upon his couch, and in the midst of the night a vision appeared unto him. A man who by his brogue and his dress was discovered to be a Macedonian, said to him, "Come over and help us." God sometimes tells men in their sleep the secret they could not discover when they were awake. We have heard of the preacher who, tired late on Saturday evening, has been unable to think of a discourse, in the middle of the night has dreamed it through, and on the morrow has ascended his pulpit and preached it. What wonder then, that the apostle Paul, specially directed by the Spirit of God, after all day long wearily exercising his mind as to the journey God intended him to take, should, after all, when in his sleep, have a vision from on high, teaching him where he should go.

And now, beloved, having thus prefaced our discourse, we have another observation to make before we proceed to a full discussion of the text. What an instance of Divine sovereignty we have in our text! He who is wise can see sovereignty everywhere in the work of salvation, but how clearly is it present here. Bithynia must not hear the gospel; the apostle desires to go and preach it there; but as yet, it seems, God does not intend that Bithynia should be evangelised. He desires to tarry in Asia, and there throughout its length and breadth preach the gospel; but he is strictly forbidden, and the command comes to him that he is to go across to Europe, and there proclaim the gospel. Was not this sovereignty? Why was it that God shut the door in Bithynia, and opened it in Philippi! Was it that Philippi was more worthy, or that Bithynia needed it less? Assuredly not. It was of God's mercy that he sent the gospel at any time, and when he sent to Philippi the most eminent of apostles to preach it, who shall blame him? Has he not a right to do what he wills with his own? But we may rest quite assured, that his sovereignty was not an arbitrary exercise of despotic will. It was a sovereignty dictated by the highest wisdom; for while God rules all things according to his own will, yet we are expressly told, that he doeth it according to the counsels of his will, his will being no blind headstrong thing, willing for no reason whatever, but being always subject to his own sense of that which is the wisest, and which will promote his glory and his creature's profit. However, we must still observe, Divine sovereignty is that which casts a rich lustre upon grace, when we recollect that it is sovereign and free. Oh ye, of the race of Britain! bless the Lord, that he hath sent the gospel unto you; for while doubtless there is wisdom in it, remember there is also sovereignty in it. "He hath not dealt so with any nation. Praise ye the Lord." Had he willed it, had he seen fit, the gospel had this day been flourishing in the centre of Africa, and you might at this moment have been destitute of the word of the gospel, living barbarians like your fathers, embruing your hands in blood. Unto the great, dread Sovereign, who ruleth as he wills on earth as in heaven, be glory for ever and ever.

And now we turn to our text. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." First, we shall observe, that *the best help that can be rendered to any people is the preaching of the gospel.* "Come over and help us," that is, preach to us. Secondly, we shall notice that *although we have no visions or dreams in the night, yet, the nations of the earth are calling to the church of the living God, and are saying to us,* "*Come over to us, and help us.*" And then, thirdly, I shall conclude, by solemnly asking the question, *what do you who love the Lord intend to say to those, who are now asking at your hands the help of a preached gospel?*

I. First, then, THE GREATEST HELP THAT CAN BE GIVEN TO ANY PEOPLE, IS THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, and when I say this, I am uttering a truth which I need not guard. The gospel is a help, not in one way, but in every way. Those who have not the gospel stand in the greatest need of help; but when the gospel is carried, you carry everything within it. In the folds of the gospel sleepeth the manifold wisdom of God, and his manifold goodness also toward the sons of men. Behold, the nations of the earth this day are still the bond-slaves of tyrants —many lands are still subject to despotic dynasties, who trample men beneath their feet, as if men were but earthen pitchers to be broken in pieces by the iron rods of kings. How is liberty to be established in these lands? Shall the point of the bayonet bring liberty to these nations that still are slaves? Never, never. Iron makes our fetters, iron rivets them, but iron never can unloose them. We need something more potent than steel to carve out the liberty of mankind.

Love, the love of the Gospel, must be the ground work of liberty an if *liberty equality*, and *fraternity*, the three great words that are the world's heir loom, are ever to be fully known and realised, it must be by the preaching of the Word of Jesus. The preaching of the gospel is the terror of despots. If you ask what makes this land free, every candid man must say it is the open gospel and the unfettered preaching of the Word. Glasgow's motto is, "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word." It is the coat of arms of liberty herself. Liberty flourishes by the preaching of the Word of God. Certain it is that wherever you find Protestantism, you find liberty, and wherever you leave Protestantism behind you, you begin to feel the yoke, and to hear the groans of the oppressed. It is true that Protestantism doth not in every place produce perfect liberty, because it is not sufficiently true to itself. There are still places where the slave feels the lash, while his master calls himself a Christian; but this is not the legitimate effect of our religion, but rather the effect of a delusion which hell itself did first invent, and which nought but the deep depravity of men could ever permit to stand before the face of God's sun. Yes, ye tyrants on your thrones, the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall yet break you in pieces! O great statue of tyranny with thy head of gold, and thy feet of clay, thou shalt yet totter, for this shall break thee in pieces, for the breaker is come out before us, and the king at the head of us, and who can withstand his might? What shall hold out against the mighty principle wherewith Christ makes men free?

Look, brethren, too, and see how the nations of the earth are lying under gloomy superstition. Perhaps there is one thing in the world worse than kingcraft, and that is priestcraft. May God save us from two things—from tyrannical kings, and from priests of all sorts. Priests of any sort are bad, but superstitious priests are the worst of all. Oh, how many nations of the earth have their intellect blighted, their hopes blasted, their progress stopped, their whole history eclipsed of its glory, their state robbed of its riches, by the cursed dominancy of priests. Men are compelled to believe just what the priest chooses. Because he wears a cassock; because he has been educated in the deep mysteries of craftiness, he is to be lord over men's consciences, and consciences and hearts are to bow before him; wherever he comes his word is to be law, his will is to open and shut the gates of heaven, for he pretends that the keys of heaven and of hades are hanging at his girdle. How shall we deliver men from these enthralling superstitions! No how, but by the preaching of the gospel. You cannot make men free, even by governments; you cannot give them a thorough freedom by giving them a republic itself; for that republic must fall so long as priestcraft is there, for liberty and priestcraft agree as well together as God and devil, and no better; and until the one falls the other can never stand.

But the preaching of the gospel which teaches that believers are all priests and kings; which lifts every one of us into the high places of princes and monarchs, and puts every one of us on a level with pontiffs and priests—this is the gospel which shall yet set men free, and the preaching of this, and this only, is the world's great and grandest hope of its deliverance from the slavery of the body and the yet more accursed bondage of the soul.

But, beloved, there are some nations of the earth that have never as yet tasted of the sweets of salvation. Large tracts of country have been discovered, where the people are still debased and degraded; the kraal of the Hottentot has not yet blossomed into a mansion, the spear of the New Zealander has not yet been entirely changed for a pruning hook. There are many places where all the joys of life and the social comforts and enjoyments of our being, are as yet totally unknown. Now, the gospel has blessings in both its hands. Wherever it goes it has the bles-

sings of heaven, rich and golden—it has the blessing of the earth, fair and silvery They are both precious things, and while we believe the gospel is ordained most of all to bless man for the hereafter, yet the secularist himself, if he were wise, must take some interest in the progress of the gospel, for it is a blessing to men even in this life. The great civilizer is the cross. Nothing else can make the barbarian into a civilized man, but the cross and the vision of Christ hanging on it. Blessed are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of peace, for where they bring the glad tidings of peace with God, they bring also good news of goodwill towards men.—even goodwill towards men as creatures here, as well as good news to them as creatures that are to exist for ever. My dear brethren and sisters, if you would bless the world, in the largest possible sense, temporarily, spiritually, and eternally; if you would bless the bodies and the souls of men; if you would bless men in their children, in their houses; if you would bless them in their meats and drinks, and in all the necessities of life, the one simple means of doing all this, is just the proclamation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that fully preached and received, has been proved in instances which I need not now stop to recall to your memories—instances abundant and recent, to be after all, the power of God, not only to salvation but to civilization too.

There is yet one more point which I must mention here in which the gospel is the best help to man. We must remember to-day, that there are districts of the earth where the ground is yet red with blood. There are sad portions of our globe that as yet must have the name of Aceldama, the field of gore; there are spots where the horse-hoof is splashed with blood; where the very carcasses of men are the food of ravens and of jackalls; the mounds of Balaclava are as yet scarcely green, and the spots where rest the relics of our own murdered sisters and brothers are not covered with the memorial stone. War has ravaged whole districts; even in these late times the dogs of war are not yet muzzled. Oh! what shall we do to put an end to war? Mars, where is the chain that shall bind thee, like Prometheus, to the rock? How shall we imprison thee for ever, thou cruel Moloch; how shall we for ever chain thee? Behold here is the great chain, that which one day is to bind the great serpent; it has the blood-red links of love. The gospel of Jesus Christ the crucified one, shall yet hush the clarion of war, and break the battle-bow in sunder

Happy are we, thrice happy, that we have a gospel which shall make men

> "Hang the useless helmet high,
> And study war no more."

Let us spread it, then, to earth's utmost bounds; for, to repeat the text I quoted just now, it hath blessings in both its hands, wherever it goes, temporarily as well as eternally, it blesses the human race. And when it shall have spread to its utmost limits, when all the habitable earth shall be covered with it, then the mist that swathes our planet shall be rolled away, and bright, like a new-born morning star, this earth shall shine out with her sister stars in all her glory, and the angels shall once more sing, and God himself shall repeat his verdict—"all things are very good."

But still, beloved, the greatest help that the gospel brings is help to the soul. Ah, Christian men, ye know what this means: your brothers and sisters are this day wandering blindfold, they know not whither. Ye know, for the Bible tells you, that they are wending their weary way down to the gulf of black despair! Oh, does not your heart desire that the blind eye should be opened, that the misguided should be directed on the path to heaven: would not your pity desire to snatch the fire brand from the flame? Do you not anxiously seek to know how you can lead the vicious to virtue, and the virtuous to the righteousness that is in Jesus Christ? Have you no desire to see God's elect ingathered, to see them washed, and sanctified, and perfected? Remember this is to be, and since it is to be, it is certain that ye must send the gospel far and wide, for by no other means can God's elect be gathered home. How can they believe without a preacher? How can they preach except they be sent? The gospel must go throughout all lands, that the elect may be gathered home, and the Messiah's kingdom come. Oh! ye who love the souls of men, it is to you an awful thought that hell's caverns are filling; it is a dreary thing to you to see the broad road so crowded with its many travellers? You are longing and wishing that the narrow way

might have more pilgrims; I beseech you, then, look to it, that by every means and by all means ye aid the preaching of the gospel of Jesus; for it is the help for which the earth calls, and the help which you must render to it. Come over and help us by preaching Christ's holy gospel. Thus have I done with the first head, may the Lord help us in the second.

II. The second point is, that although not in visions of the night, yet EVERY DAY AND EVERY HOUR, THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH ARE SAYING, "COME OVER AND HELP US." Do you not know, that the loudest eloquence is silence? To move the heart of the right-minded, ye need not the declamation of the orator. The sight of silent, dumb misery, is the highest eloquence to a tender heart. It is true, I must confess it, the nations of the earth do not vocally ask for your help; nay, worse than that, if you send them the help of the gospel, they will many of them reject it. Your missionaries have been slain,—the altars of false gods have been stained with their blood; but still I solemnly repeat it, the nations of the earth are silently crying, "Come over and help us." If I saw a person in the street sick, faint, and dying, although he spoke not to me, though he asked me not to befriend him, I should think the weakness of his silence more potent than all the power of words. Ay, and if I saw him like a maniac, rejecting my help and pushing me from him, if I was convinced that he was really a maniac, for that very reason that he needed my help, I would thrust my alms upon him. I would willingly give him my help and assistance; and so must you do. The nations of the earth are dead in sin; how can they cry to you? But it is yours to see their misery; and let the poor, poor dumb wounds of this bleeding earth speak to you. It is true, earth is a maniac, and it puts away the only cure. But what care we for that? It is ours to thrust our kindness upon unwilling men, because we believe that their unwillingness arises from the madness of their disease. Let us take the poor man that has fallen among thieves. Let us pour in the oil and the wine, and if he doth not receive it gratefully, because he is faint, if he putteth his hand upon the wound, and rends away the liniment, and unbinds the plaster, nevertheless, let us bind him up again, and set him upon our own beast, and carry him to the inn. Let us pay for the lodging, even though as yet he cannot speak to thank us; and the day shall come, when the wound is healed, and the burning fever is removed; when his brain is cool, and his reason restored, that he shall fall at our feet and kiss the hand that once he spurned. Unborn generations shall bless the men that sent the gospel, which at first their fathers did reject.

And now, brethren and sisters, let me plead the cause of the dumb. No man of Macedonia is here to-day to say, "Come over and help us;" but let me be the heathen's spokesman, and very earnestly ask you to come and help him. Methinks, I will stand here as a heathen this morning, and I say to you, as if I had not heard the gospel, "Ye Christians of Britain! ye highly favoured ones, who know the name of Jesus and prove the power of the Spirit, preach the gospel to us, for we are men like yourselves. What though our skin be of a colour less fair than your own? Yet he fashioneth our hearts alike. Oh tell us not, because we feed on the locust, and eat the serpent, that therefore we are not of your kith and kind! 'Not that which goeth into a man defileth a man.' It is true, our kings and princes are only fit to rank with your beggars; but oh! God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth; and from our huts and cabins we come forth to-day, and we say to you, 'We are men—we are your brothers—younger brothers, it is true—we have not had a double portion of the inheritance; brothers, too, whose fathers spent their part in riotous living; but why should the children's teeth be set on edge because the fathers have eaten sour grapes? Why must the son of Ham for ever bear the curse of Canaan? O preach the gospel to us! We are men; mother Eve is our mother, as well as yours; Adam, too, is the father from whose loins we sprang; and because we are men, the common sympathy of humanity bids you listen to us, when we say, 'Come over and help us.' Besides, we have another argument. We are told that 'unto you is the Word of this salvation sent,' not for yourselves, but for us, brothers, who have not heard the gospel, and who know it not. And you have the treasure in your own land; and we believe you have the treasure given to you, that you may lavish handfuls of it out to us. We know that old Judea had the covenant and the oracles, and the gospel to keep for coming generations; and we believe that you men of Britain have the gospel, not for yourselves, but for us. We have heard that your Master said, 'Ye are the lights of the world;' not lights of Britain, not

lights for yourselves, but the lights of the world. Oh! bear your burning torches into the glades of our dark forests; come and shed your light through the dark mists of our idolatrous temples; let the bats of our superstition, and the owls of our ignorance, fly away before the sunlight of your gospel. It is not for yourselves you have received it, but for us. Oh! give it to us. Preach the gospel to us, for it is designed for us. But we have another argument, brethren; look at our miseries!"

As the spokesman for my poor brethren to-day, I stand before you, and I remind you of the tortures to which the poor Hindoo devotee puts himself. I remind you of the cruelties enacted in the Chinese empire—the horrors of a government that is based upon idolatry. I tell you of the distress, the destitution, the poverty, the nakedness, the misery, of the Bechuanas and the Bushmen; and I speak for these, and I say, "Christians, you have the means of alleviating their woes by sending them the gospel; will you not do it?" Look at the dwellers in the land of the jungle and the lion. There they are; the serpent has grasped them in his folds, and like the boa-constrictor of their own forests, he is crushing their nations, until the ribs of the strong man snap, and the hearts of the women melt like wax. And you have the sword in your hands that can cut the serpent's head! Your Master bruised that head beneath his heel, and you must do the same. Oh! come, come, ye missionaries of the cross, ye ministers of Jesus, come and deliver us from this deadly hydra! Save us from our fearful doom! Our miseries invoke your aid. It is true, we cannot speak to you in gentle language; but there was a time when poets walked amongst us, and some of the light that shone in Paradise, yet gilded our darkness; and we treasured up a few of those faint rays, and we are hoping that the sun of righteousness will yet dawn upon us. Oh! come, roll away those mists; come, chase our night, and let us see that sacred, high, eternal noon, which is the daughter of the gospel following the Sun of Righteousness.

And now, Christian men, let me speak to you as one of yourselves. Brethren, you and I are soldiers, soldiers of the cross, and at this hour worlds are rushing to the shock. The fight is thickening, and we are warriors! Shame upon the craven who stays from the battle. The trump is sounding to-day. Mohammed has waked from his sleep; the Moslem, with bloody hands, has sought to slay our race; the Hindoo, too, the meek-eyed Hindoo, his eyes have glared like the eyes of his tiger, and his lips have smacked with gore. The battle is raging. Not there alone. Popery hath aroused itself; with mighty effort it is endeavouring to win back this gem of the sea, this first isle of the ocean. Infidelity, too, is on the stir; her myrmidons are flying here and there. Everything is awake, except the church of God. Oh! rouse ye, men and brethren; rouse, now that the fight is at its fullest fury. Now is the time for our most desperate valour, our most earnest zeal. Recollect, every time you bow your knees, and say, "Our Father," you tell a lie at the end of that prayer, if you are not seeking to make his kingdom come, and his will be done in earth, as it is heaven. You are praying for what you do not try to get; you are insulting God by saying, "Thy kingdom come," with as foul a mockery, as if I should say, "Be warmed and be filled," to some poor dying beggar, and then refused to give to his needs, that he might remove his distresses.

Recollect, too, that you cannot be Christians at all, not in the right sense of the word, unless you everyone of you would compass sea and land to make one proselyte. You must have in you the spirit of propagation, desirous to win others to Christ, or else the genuine blood of Christianity is not in your veins. Of all things in the world Christianity is the most prolific, if it be true. Mohammedism of old had mighty power to spread itself, but not such power as Christianity had. The religion of Jesus began like a mustard seed, with those few men in an upper-room; but ere a half century had rolled away, the gospel was preached to every nation under heaven; and if we had Christianity in our hearts of the right sort—hot, burning stuff, not the lukewarm shams of this degenerate age, our religion, ere another half a century will have won the day. If the Spirit of God should give us true diligence, in the course of another half century there would not be one district that would not have been trodden by the foot of the minister, nor one town or city which would not have been evangelized. I know I am not speaking without book now; I am absolutely certain that what I am saying is a sober matter of fact. If you will just calculate the proportion between the four hundred, and the progress made in one half a century, and then begin with the three or four millions—I should hope there are as many as that—of true Christians in the

world, I say, it is a little thing to believe that if they were true to their profession, they might, under Divine blessing, carry the gospel into every known part of the habitable world before half a century has rolled away. However, we need not be afraid we shall do it. There is no fear that we shall run into any fanaticism. That is the last sin this age will commit. We shall go on, and be as orthodox and cold as we always were. No enthusiasm will ever fall upon us. We shall not see any very great and strange developments of an enormous fanaticism at the present day. Do not be alarmed, brothers and sisters. All I preach that looks like fanaticism will not hurt this age. Ye may do what ye will; preach ye never so wisely, ye will never make this deaf adder hear. The church of this day is a great deal too deaf to do anything extravagant. We do a little, and think it a wonderful deal. We each give fourpence to send Testaments to China; we will talk of it for the next fifty years! We sent out one or two missionaries to India; (and are they not one or two, compared with their needs?) it is a great thing. It is a fine thing for the whole Baptist denomination to raise twenty thousand pounds a year, when there are some men in the denomination who make as much money as that in the time. It is a marvellous thing that out of the whole lot of us we should not be able to get more than that. But you know I am an imprudent young man, of course,—I always shall be I dare say—to dare to hint that some people have a great deal too much money to go to heaven with. Of course it will be very wicked if I dare to say this morning, that to die rich is a very frightful thing; that there are some people who have got too much riches to allow us to have any sure and certain hope that they have the love of God at all; for if they had more of the love of God, they would not grip their money so tightly. They would say, "While men are damning, what is my money? While men are dying, what is my gold? There it goes! As much as I need, I have, God allows it me; as much as I shall require in my old age, as much as my family can demand of me, that will I have, but as for more, a blast and a curse would be on it if I had it. My gold and my silver would be cankered, for I should be guilty of the blood of men's souls, and then condemnation would be at my door, because I had the money wherewithal to send the minister to preach to them, and I would not give it."

Now, I say again, there is no fear of any one becoming improvidently liberal. You need not be frightened that anyone here will give a thousand pounds this morning. We provide ample accommodation for those who feel inclined to do so. If anyone should be overtaken with such an enormous fit of generosity, we will register and remember it. But I fear there are no people like Barnabas now. Barnabas brought all he had, and put it into the treasury. "My dear friend, do not do that; do not be so rash." Ah! he will not do that; there is no necessity for you to advise him. But I do say again, if Christianity were truly in our hearts; if we were what we professed to be; the men of generosity whom we meet with now and hold up as very paragons and patterns would cease to be wonders, for they would be as plentiful as leaves upon the trees. We demand of no man that he should beggar himself; but we do demand of every man who makes a profession that he is a Christian, that he should give his fair proportion, and not be content with giving as much to the cause of God as his own servant. We must have it that the man who is rich must give richly. We know the widow's mite is precious, but the widow's mite has been an enormously great loss to us. O, that widow's mite has lost Jesus Christ many a thousand pounds. It is a very good thing in itself; but people with thousands a-year talk of giving a widow's mite. What a wicked application of what never can apply to them. No; in our proportion we must serve our God.

III. Now, I come in conclusion to ask you very pointedly and plainly, WHAT YOU MEAN TO DO IN ANSWER TO THE HEATHEN'S CRY, "COME OVER AND HELP US?" Have I in all this congregation one man who loves sound doctrine, who has ability to preach, and who has a mind to go and preach the gospel in other lands? Because if I have, and if I have ten others who have a mind to give him ten pounds a year, I have an opening for sending him out at once. In Port Natal there are twenty Baptists, and those twenty Baptists are desirous of having a minister who should not only preach to them, but to the wild tribes around. They will raise him one hundred pounds, if we can manage to get the rest and send them out a missionary. Who can tell; he might be another Livingstone, perhaps a Moffat? Oh, that I had the honour of sending such an one from such a congregation as this! Have we no young men here this morning, who

are ready to volunteer to go and preach the gospel in heathen lands? I confess, when I think of myself, I know I cannot go away. My calling is here. And yet I sometimes think what a lazy, feather-bed life it is for one to lead, to be preaching here when there are all these continents without the gospel. Some people think it wonderfully hard to preach two or three sermons a week; but I think preaching thirteen or fourteen is a fearfully little thing. And I think sometimes, "Oh, if I were somewhere else, where there are some toils, some hardships to undergo! There is nothing to be done here. We cannot suffer, we cannot work, we cannot win crowns of martyrdom, we cannot win great battles here, as we could wish." Yes, young man, I say again, if you are ambitious—if you are ambitious to serve Christ, the height of your ambition should lead you to say, "I desire to preach the gospel among the heathen." I hope there may be some here—some one at least—whose heart God hath touched. What! can it be possible that I should this morning address some eight thousand people, and yet out of the whole eight thousand there is not one who can say, "Here am I, send me?" Is it not strange? Very probably there is not. But yet I would fain hope that somewhere there is one, who will write on the tablet of his heart, "I will go home to pray, I will go home to study, and if God has given me power to preach, if there be any door open in his providence, here am I; I will be a preacher of the gospel in foreign lands."

And now, what are *you* resolved to do who cannot preach? Why, there are some of you, if you were to get up and preach, you had a great deal better sit down. It would not do for you to go and preach in foreign lands, because nobody would listen to you. I have often marvelled that some people should think themselves called to preach when they have no ability. As I tell them, "If God calls anybody to fly, he will give them wings; and if he calls them to preach, he will give them ability to preach:" but if a man has not the ability to preach, I am sure he has not the call. Well, what will you do? Says one, "I will pray earnestly in support of missions; I will cry to God, that great results may follow." Do so; and you shall have our best thanks for your prayers. But in doing that, you have not done very much; for recollect, that is what the Roman priest did for the beggar. The priest said he would not give him a sovereign, he would not give him a half-crown, nor would he give him a penny. "Holy father," said the beggar, "will you give me your prayers?" "Yes," said the priest, "kneel down." "No, not so," said the beggar; "for if your prayers had been worth a penny, you would not have given them to me." And when you say you will pray, but will not help the cause with something more substantial; though we love your prayers, we might say, "You would not give them if they were worth a penny." If you have nought else to give to Christ, ye need not be ashamed of saying, "Jesus, I give thee my prayers;" but if you are blessed in your substance, you will be lying before him, if you ask him to bless his cause, and do not give of your means in its support.

Now, let each, as he is able, help this great cause; and above all, let us all in our spheres be preachers of the gospel,

"Seeking to tell to others round,
What a dear Saviour we have found."

Let me say, before the collection is made, just this word. Alas! there are some of you here, that are as much heathen as if you were in Africa. To you I proclaim the gospel, and I have done—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

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CONCEALING THE WORDS OF GOD.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 27TH, 1879, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

(*On behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society.*)

"I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."—Job vi. 10.

JOB'S dire distress was aggravated by the remarks of his friends. Eliphaz the Temanite opened fire against him in such words as these: "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." As much as to say, you can preach but you cannot practise. Where now your sermons and advices to others? It was a shameful thing thus to throw in the good man's teeth his testimonies in former days; but Job, who under all his sorrow always retained his clearness of intellect and singular shrewdness, took the words of Eliphaz and used them for his own comfort. They were bread and meat to him, though brought in a raven's mouth. "Yes," says he, "I have comforted many, and my words have instructed the ignorant and strengthened the feeble, and this is so much my comfort in the hour of my affliction that I dare even ask God to let loose his hand upon me and end my life. Let him not spare me, for I have the testimony of my conscience that I have not been disloyal to my God. The taunt of my accuser proves that I have not concealed the words of the Holy One." It is always well to be able thus to turn the enemy's guns upon himself, and to extract comfort from that which was meant to grieve us.

Job made no idle boast when he said that he had not concealed the words of the Holy One, for we know from his history that he had been a bold confessor of the truth of God. We are informed that he was carefully watchful as to his own family that the words of the Holy One should be there esteemed and known, especially that grandest of all holy words concerning sacrifice and atonement: for we read that when his children had kept birthdays at each other's houses and had fulfilled their days of feasting, "Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them

all: for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." He was earnest for the purity of his family and the keeping up of the sacrifices which were typical of the cleansing of sin; and thus he made known to his descendants the central word of all the words of the Holy One. Even in the time of his affliction the patriarch had not spoken other than according to the mind of God. What said he when he had lost all his possessions, and was left without a child? "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." And when his wife, seeing him covered with a loathsome disease, bade him curse God and die, he did not withhold his testimony from her, but said, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" These were words given him of the Lord in the moment of his need, and he shunned not to utter them with all his heart. The inspired testimony about this holy man is that "in all this did not Job sin with his lips."

It is clear that in his prosperity Job was a most faithful witness for God. We will not speculate about the time or the place in which he lived; but wherever he lived he was a man of great influence, and was held in high esteem. He says, "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth." This influence was always exerted for the cause of truth and righteousness, which is always the cause of God. In the twenty-ninth chapter he says of himself, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." He was thus by his conduct a perpetual protest against sin, a continued proclamation of justice, righteousness, mercy, and love, in the age in which he lived; and he could, therefore, say without any word of egotism, "I have not concealed the words of the Holy One." This was now a comfort to him when all other comforts failed: he knew that his affliction was not the fruit of a treacherous departure from God, or a cowardly concealment of his faith. He felt that he could face death, and even long for it, because he had been loyal to his God, and faithful to the light which had been vouchsafed him from on high. It was not self-righteousness which led Job to speak thus, but only such a use of the sure evidences of grace as would be natural and proper in any godly man in the hour of his extremity. It is the nature of obedience to yield peace to the heart, and no one can be blamed for enjoying that peace. It cannot be wrong for our consciences to bear testimony to the sincerity and purity of our lives, nor wrong that when our hearts condemn us not we have confidence towards God. He who is most undivided in his faith in Jesus may, nevertheless, derive comfort from having been enabled to be loyal to his God. Did not Paul bless God for much the same faithfulness as Job claimed when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"? Happy shall he be who has

a clear testimony within his soul that he has declared the truth of God in all honesty and earnestness, even to the end.

Job had not refrained from an *open confession* of his own faith in God: he had been known in the gates of the city as a worshipper of the Lord, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. He had never hidden his faith, but had owned one God whom he here calls the Holy *One*. While gods many and lords many divided the fealty of nations, Job was true to the one only God; and believed his words as they were revealed to him. Nor was he content with an open confession of his own faith, Job had made a continued *communication* of what he knew to others. He had taught his family,—there all teaching should begin. He had taught his fellow-citizens, by his example—the most powerful of all teaching. Never had he wandered into idolatry, or worshipped the sun when it shined, or kissed his hand to the queen of heaven; but, on the contrary, he had avowed the one and only Lord without fear. He asks, "Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me that I kept silence?" So faithful had he been that he cries, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." This was high ground to take, but it evidently strengthened the good man's heart to bear his troubles, and it will do the same for us if we can win the same witness from our consciences.

Now, brethren, this is a comfort we ought to seek after. It should be our care that when we come to die, we may not have to cry, "I was ashamed of Jesus, and now I shall find him ashamed of me: I hid his truth in unrighteousness, wrapping my talent in a napkin; what shall I do, or whither shall I turn? A servant unfaithful to his trust, I have to give an account of my stewardship, and I cannot do it! Woe is me!" God grant that we may be able to say with Job, "I have not concealed the words of the Holy One." Many professors will need greatly to alter their ways, or they will be covered with confusion in the day of the Lord. Blessed and holy is he who can declare with David, or rather with David's son, "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness, and thy truth from the great congregation." (Psalm xl. 10).

We have more of the words of the Holy One than Job had, and should therefore be the more anxious to make them known. I suppose he had no inspired book to read: he could not have had any more than the Books of Moses, probably he had not those; but the Lord spoke to him as he often spoke to the prophets in the olden time, and he had also learned those truths which had been handed down from the earliest days from father to son. Now we have a vast mass of sacred literature, and we have besides that the Word himself, who is the hope of our souls and the Lord of our hearts. O brethren, if we wickedly hide what God has revealed to us we shall be veiling a great light, and we shall heap up guilt like the hills. When we come to die we shall feel a misery proportionate to the enormity of our crime; we shall be tortured with agonizing thoughts for having, as far as we were able, quenched the Spirit and blotted out the testimony of the Most High. God forbid that we should be guilty of such an enormity.

Job, according to the language of our text, evidently had a great

reverence for every word of the Lord. He would not have used that term, "the Holy One," if he had not felt the holiness of the words themselves, and if he had not stood in solemn awe of him who spake them. He felt that they must not be concealed, because the words of the Holy One should have free course, and be published abroad. Should not the word of a king be circulated through the length and breadth of his dominions? Have you and I such a reverence for every revealed truth? Do we stand in awe of every word of God? If we do it will be well for us if we practically express our homage after the fashion of David, who said, "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth." The words which God speaks are uttered that *we* may speak them. It is the best homage to a word to hear it and to repeat it. Let us proclaim God's words abroad: they are light and are not meant to be hidden. Such candles ought never to be put under a bushel. To hide the divine words would be a great sin against the Most High, and to warn you against it will be the aim of this morning's discourse. I shall speak with the earnest prayer that both to myself and to each one of you there may be a personal voice from God stirring every conscience as to this matter, and making each one of us enquire whether or no we also can say, "I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."

We shall divide our subject thus. First, we shall have a little to say about *the sin to be avoided:* then we will give some strong *arguments for avoiding it:* and, thirdly, suggest some *methods by which we may be enabled to avoid it.*

I. Here is A SIN TO BE AVOIDED—concealing the words of the Holy One. Now, we can conceal those words *from ourselves* as well as from others. "How conceal them from ourselves?" say you. I think that very great stress must be laid upon this form of the evil, which lies at the root of the second shape of it. We can conceal the word of God from ourselves in many ways. The *law* of God speaks with searching and threatening voice: it tells us of our sin, it forewarns us of the punishment, and it sets our danger both present and future before our mind's eye: but there are thousands of persons who never give the law an opportunity of being heard in their hearts: they turn a deaf ear to anything which is unpleasant to them; they do not like to face the honest truth. You know why this is. Why does not a man who is a bankrupt in business take any pleasure in his books? Why is it that he postpones all settlements and endeavours to forget his affairs? Is it not because his ruin is near at hand? If there is any truth, my friend, that you are afraid of, you have cause to be afraid of it; but let me forewarn you that there is no escaping from a fact by endeavouring to forget it. Every honest man, every brave man, every man who is truly a man, would like to face his true condition, and see what and where he is. One of the prayers which I commend to your frequent use is this, "Lord, let me know the very worst of my case, that I may not be living upon vain pretensions, and may not be pluming myself with being in a happy condition while all the while I am in awful danger." Let it never be said of any one of you that you concealed the words of the Holy One about yourselves by refusing to feel their force lest they should end the flattering visions of your fond conceit. Love truth even though it cut you to the quick. Ask God to search you and try you, and to make you sensible of sin and

of judgment to come: this is the part of honesty and common sense. You will indeed be foolish if you conceal the words of the Holy One from your conscience, and so flatter your soul into destruction.

Others conceal the *gospel* word, that word which speaks of the free gift of pardoning mercy, which is of many offences unto justification. They go about to find out some way of their own for self-salvation, and do not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. Beloved, do pray the Lord to help you to know the gospel thoroughly; and to understand its glorious simplicity, its sweet freeness and boundless fulness. Do not put out the light which alone can lead you to eternal life. Do not shut your eyes to the lamp divine; do not conceal from yourselves those humbling but yet soul-saving doctrines, which make for your souls eternal peace. Shut not against yourselves the one gate of paradise. Hide the gospel *in* your heart by all means, but hide it not *from* your heart, lest you sin against your own soul.

I ought, also, to warn every brother here of concealing any of the words of God from himself, by accepting half the truth and rejecting the rest. Receive *the whole of revelation*. Some professors have favourite texts and choice portions of Scripture, and they regard other parts of the word with aversion, avoiding them as much as possible, because they do not agree with their system of divinity, and need much squaring before they will fit in with their foregone conclusions. They do not read such passages, or read them carelessly, or a commentator is sought out who, by the exercise of much ingenuity, will impute another meaning than the true one to the words of God. Brethren, open your souls to divine light. Give the word of God free admittance into your spirits. Lay no embargo upon any form of truth; demand no toll for the commodities of heaven. Let your mind be an open port, carrying on a free trade in the treasures of the gospel. Believe whatever God says, because God says it, though you may not always see its why and wherefore or perceive its internal consistency. Be prepared, and even anxious, to know the whole truth as far as you can know it, and let it pervade your entire being with its holy influence. It will be a terrible thing if one of these days you shall have to say, "I rejected a great truth. I had a suspicion that it was so, but I did not wish to believe it, and so I shut my ears to its evidence. I had a leaning towards the opposite view and I felt committed to it, and so refused to alter." Open both your eyes, my brethren. If you cannot see everything, yet see all you can see, and pray the Lord to take each scale away that you may know all the truth, and so the truth may make you wholly free.

There is, again, a concealing of the truth from ourselves in one other respect, namely, when we try to avoid the word of *command*. There be some professed Christians of peculiar doctrinal opinions to whom the word "duty" is something dreadful, and if the preacher dwells upon gospel precept they call him "legal." I am not much in awe of that word myself, for being interpreted it means lawful, and none of us would like to be unlawful preachers. These folks insinuate that the preaching of the practical precepts of the gospel is in conflict with the grace of God, and is little better than preaching up human merit; whereas the doctrine of God our Saviour is always a doctrine according to holiness, and good works are the sure results of true faith. True gospel preaching

does not decry holy living; nay, it sets up the highest possible standard and declares the way to reach it. Beware of picking and choosing in reference to the commands of Christ. Some professors object to much of the teaching of him whom they call Master and Lord. The forgiving of injuries as we hope to be forgiven, the non-resistance principle of turning the other cheek when one is smitten,—these are very objectionable to ordinary religionists. Such precepts are denounced as impracticable, and it is asserted that they cannot be carried out. Doing unto others as ye would that they should do to you is regarded as a golden precept for other people to practise towards our dear selves, but not at all a practical maxim from us to the general public. When persons speak of our Lord's precepts as good but impracticable, they make him out to be an amiable simpleton. Is this their reverence for the incarnate wisdom? I need not stop to quote examples, but there are many such things in the word of God as precepts which good men decline to see, which, indeed, they declare that they cannot see. If you put a gold piece over the boldest printed verse in the Bible you will not be able to see the passage; and there are some whose profits in business, whose position in life, above all, whose "respectability" will not allow them to see certain precepts, and so they do not see them, and they pass through life without obeying the plain command of the Lord. I pray you do not so, for wilful ignorance is no excuse for disobedience. It is written, "He that knew his Master's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes;" and, mark you, he that did not know his Master's will, but might have known it and deliberately declined to know it, shall take his place with those who bear the heavier punishment. The plea of ignorance shall not avail such persons except it be to make them also take their place with the man who receives the few stripes, and so they shall partake in both the greater and the lesser scourging, inasmuch as they are worthy to range with both kinds of offenders. Try to know what God would have you do, and pray that by his Holy Spirit when you know it you may put it into speedy and cheerful practice, and this shall be a comfort to you.

Still, the point I want to bring out is that the holy man in our text *had not concealed God's truth from others.* We can do this in many ways. We can conceal the words of the Holy One by *not confessing the truth at all.* A Christian, but he never said so! He hid himself along with Joseph of Arimathea, although he never offered his new tomb to his Lord. He justified himself by the example of Nicodemus, though he never brought spices for his Lord's burial! There was a time when there might be secret disciples of Christ, but that was before the cross was lifted up; but it is written concerning our Lord's death that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed by it, and now Christ's followers follow him openly. I should not like to be among those who expect to slink into heaven by a back door, some dark night, and intend never to disclose themselves till they throw off the mask, and stand before the wondering eyes of angels, Christians who passed through the world disguised as unregenerate men. No, no; our Lord has said, "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess; but he that denieth me, him will I deny." Do not run risks upon that score. If you love the Lord, say so; if you expect him to own you, own him.

We may conceal the words of the Holy One, although we have made an

open confession, by a *sinful silence* about the gospel towards others, I am afraid I should not be too censorious if I said that there are many professors of religion who never talk of Christ to others, and never seek the salvation of anybody. Are there any such people here now—in this gallery, or down below in this area? You have found a medicine which has healed your soul, but you never mention it to the thousands who are sick around you! You have not even named it to your own children! Can such cruelty be possible? Where do you sit? Are you there? No, good people do not move away from him! He has something human about him I hope still, though certainly not much that is *humane*. You were hungry and you have found bread, and you have eaten it; and yet though around you thousands are perishing with hunger, you have no pity on them! Many loaves are in your stores at home, but you spare none for these starving ones. You eat your morsel alone; and all the while thousands are dying outside your window, yea, they are perishing by millions. Do you care nothing for their woes? Are you a man or a demon? The Lord have mercy upon you! I will say no more than this, for I think I need not prove that it must be an atrocious sin for a man to know the words of the Holy One and not to make them known to others. This sin is easily committed by a silence which pleads modesty, but which ought to confess to cowardice, therefore be aware of the cheat.

Some who speak often, nevertheless conceal the words of the Lord by *their own words*. The Roman Catholic Church stands convicted of concealing the words of the Holy One, by the use of the Latin tongue in the daily service. Whatsoever there is of good in the mass, ought to be spoken in such language that everybody can understand and receive it; but instead thereof the people stand and look on and know not what is being done, and if there be aught that might edify and instruct, they are not cognizant of it, because it is hidden from them by words unknown to them. Protestants! you condemn this practice, but are not many of you guilty yourselves? Did you listen to that splendid sermon? What rhetoric! What oratory! But those poor people in the aisles did not understand a word, or if they did they only comprehended disconnected sentences, and lost the soul of the discourse. Is this right? Is this according to the Scriptural idea of preaching? "Oh, but," you say, "the great man does not preach to that class of people." But his Master did, and he bade men take note that in the gospel dispensation the poor have the gospel preached unto them. He would have his ministers preach so that they can be understood of all men. It is a pity when you hang the cross with your artificial flowers until you hide the wounds of Christ. Down, down, down with all your tawdry rhetoric! Your so-called eloquence deserves a curse, since it robs the simple of a blessing. Few things have so much damaged the church of God as "the wisdom of words." A sweet and solemn simplicity which a child can comprehend is after the fashion of our Master, therefore let us aim at it. When you talk about Jesus Christ, make your speech very plain, lest under the ornaments of your language you should conceal the words of the Holy One.

The thing can be done again by clouding the truth with *error*. There is such a thing as laying a substratum of truth, and then overlaying it

with human opinions, after the manner of the boastful school of modern thought, whose novelties are set before us as the matured fruit of the culture of the nineteenth century: this also is concealing the words of the Holy One. You may, perhaps, have seen ancient parchments containing words of holy writ, which have been covered over and then re-written with popish legends: these palimpsests (that is their technical name) are the types and symbols of the discourses of the philosophical divines of the school of *culture*. The gospel of Jesus Christ is hidden by their so-called "thought,"—*their own* thoughts are set before the thoughts of God. What shall we say to such thinking but that it is a presumptuous setting up of human intellect above the revelation of the Lord? What shall we say of such culture but that it cultivates a pride which had better have been cut up by the roots? It conceals the words of the Holy One that fallible man may sit upon the throne of wisdom, and make his own religion, and be his own God.

We may yet further conceal the words of God by an *inconsistent life*. You have often heard it said that the worldling does not read his Bible, but he reads professing Christians; he never troubles to read a chapter, but he reads his godly relatives. Many a man has found Christ through reading some dear and venerated mother, whose living and dying experience has been God's testimony to his soul. See, then,—if our lives are crooked, perverse, unkind, ungenerous, unholy, selfish, un-Christly we conceal the words of God; for men will not read a true gospel in us, nor have a true idea of our religion. They will not care to hear a gospel which produces such characters as ours, if those characters are unlovely. Men lay all our faults at the door of our Master: and thus we crucify him afresh. They say, "That is your religion," though they must know better. They will always say so, for after this manner the enemies of God have always gloried over Israel. He who lives not after a godly and holy sort is guilty of concealing the words of the Holy One in the most injurious manner. Let us all try to avoid this sin, because it is contrary to the practical genius of Christianity, which commands godly men to shine as lights in the world. Sinful silence, as to the blessed word of grace, is rebellion against our Lord's last command—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"; therefore, be not chargeable with so grave a crime.

II. In the second place we will give a mere outline of the ARGUMENTS FOR AVOIDING THIS SIN. The subject is weighty and deserves a longer consideration, but time compels me to condense. And first, the man who conceals the word of God is out of order with God. God speaks that he may be heard, and that his mind may be known. The evident design of words is to make known the speaker's mind. To run parallel with his wish, therefore, is to give his words free course to the ends of the earth. O thou who professest to be a child of God, wilt thou run counter to the design of the Most High, and when he speaks wilt thou by concealing his words make him to be as though he spake not? Such a silence is out of gear with the whole course of nature. "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork: day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." The whole creation after its own inarticulate manner proclaims its Maker and Preserver. Rocks find a voice, and waters have a tongue. Stars

sing by shining, and darkness preaches by its solemnity. Shall man alone be dumb? God forbid that he should be creation's silent chord when every other string is vibrating with praise. No; let us pray the Holy Spirit to put us into order with God and with his universe, and let us no more conceal his words.

If you wish to see the sin of concealing the gospel, think of the consequences which would have followed if others had done so. If the apostles had never risked their lives to preach, what had the nations been? If martyrs had never yielded their blood in testimony, would not thick darkness have brooded over the nations still? Imagine the consequences, if you can, if Luther had taken the advice of his godly but timid friend, when he said, "Get thee to thy cell and pray: meddle not with things too high for thee." Imagine what history would have been if Wycliffe, and Tyndal, and Calvin, and Zwingle, and all those lights of the world, had hidden themselves through cowardice. *They* had been guilty, but we had been miserable. Now, what would have been criminal in them must be evil in us, also, in proportion to our degree. We owe it to coming generations that we hand on the torch of truth as it has been handed down to us; let us not be unfaithful to our trust.

If we conceal the words of the Holy One, we shall evidently err, because the motive for so doing can hardly be supposed to be other than sinful. If we conceal God's truth, it will probably be out of cowardice, and to be a coward under the command of such a Captain as ours is treason. Probably, self-love will be the ruling motive, but we are told expressly that he who loves his life shall lose it, and that Christ is to be better loved than life itself. Those who love the word of God, are often moved to do so by pride, which cannot stoop to be despised; or fear, which dreads ridicule; or love of the world, which seeks the applause of men. Is it not atrocious ingratitude to him who was derided and spit upon for our sakes if we hide his glory to escape from shame? I feel it difficult to conceive an argument for concealing God's word which would hold water for a single moment; certainly I can invent none which will bear the test of the great trial day to which we all must come. If then the motive of such concealment is evil, it must itself be evil.

I have already hinted that common humanity requires that if we have received the precious truth of God, we should not conceal it. I feel as if your natures responded to the remark, and that I needed not again enforce it, having done so already. If you love men, if you would make them happy here, if you would save them from perishing hereafter, I beseech you make known to them with holy earnestness the way of salvation contained in the words of the Holy One. For if not, be it known unto you that all the results of concealment will be chargeable upon you. If the next generation should become more wicked than the present, and still more ignorant of the gospel, the fact will be chargeable upon those who conceal the words of God to-day. If the masses through not knowing the gospel reject it and continue in their sin, the calamity and crime will be charged upon those dumb lips which never speak of Jesus. If sinners sink to hell, passing out of this world unsaved, and they have come into contact with Christian men who gave them no warning, on whose skirts will their blood be found? Yea, more; recollect

that even if sinners be saved by some other agency it does not exonerate those who neglected to warn them; for since the silence naturally tended to destruction those who were guilty of it shall be judged as if the uninstructed were destroyed, even though by God's interposition it is not so. If the natural result of any line of conduct is prevented by divine interference its criminality is by no means lessened. The conduct itself may be judged by what it would naturally result in if it were left to itself. Many a man has been guilty of murder who nevertheless did not actually spill his fellow's blood, because he did that which he knew would kill; and it is no praise of his that death did not come of it. So, if a corrupt, unholy silence would slay a soul, even though that soul be saved, the wickedly silent one is guilty of soul murder all the same. You are shifting uneasily in your seats, some of you; this is a good sign, for many might do so without being too sensitive.

How again, dear friends, can any man prove his loyalty to his God or his likeness to the Saviour, if he continues to conceal the words of the Holy One? What canst thou do for God but obey him, and when he speaks to thee gladly make known to others the truth which has sounded in thine ears? How canst thou be like to Jesus, thy professed Master, if thou hast no witness to bear for the good of men? He went about doing good, his life was transparent, he wore the gospel on his sleeve, spoke it with his eyes, and revealed it in his daily life. How canst thou be like him if thou dost smuggle away the gospel as if it were contraband goods to be hidden away from all eyes? How canst thou bury the priceless truth like a miser who hoards up his cankered gold? Tell out the heavenly message! Tell it all around! Tell it so long as voice remains! If thou art a true servant of God thou canst not stifle the voice of Jesus, who out of heaven cries to the sons of men.

Now, think once more and we shall see the sinfulness of the conduct we denounce. What will it be to meditate upon a dying bed on having known the truth, but having never in any way assisted to spread it? What will it be to lie with eternity just before you, and to reflect, "I have been a member of a church many years, but I have never brought in a single convert. I sat in my pew, and I knew the divine secret, but I never told even a child of it. Neither by pen nor tongue did I make Jesus known. I left that to the minister. I knew there were good people about who cared for men's souls, but I had no such feeling: I kept myself to myself, and felt no anxiety about my neighbours. I had very little care as to whether souls were saved or not. I was glad when I heard of an increase to the church, but not very particularly so; I was rather sorry when things were down,—not so sorry that I lost my appetite, or lay awake ten minutes. I did not trouble myself more than I could help, for I was foolish enough to dream that the best thing I could do was to consult my own interests, and I fancied that my chief end was to enjoy myself for ever." Now, I can imagine such a person sore beset with horrors when he comes to die, and struggling hard to get anything like a glimpse of hope. His whole life has been that of selfishness, how can he be a Christian? Conscience will ask him, "Is this Christlike, this keeping back of the divine bread from the perishing millions, this concealing of the light of God? Surely you are no follower of the Crucified!"

How will such conduct look at the last great day? The Lord Jesus will say to some, "I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink." Now mark, these sentences refer to temporal bread and water, but they must be more emphatic still when they relate to spiritual things. If the Lord Jesus shall say, "There were hungering souls, and you professed to know the gospel, but you gave them no meat: there were thirsty souls, and you professed to have drank of the water of life, and you gave them no drink," can there be any answer? Will not such persons stand speechless, dumbly confessing the justice of the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed"?

III. I shall close by mentioning one or two METHODS BY WHICH WE MAY AVOID THIS SIN. I am speaking now to you who have believed in Jesus and are truly his own disciples.

First, take care that you make an open profession of your faith. Come out from the world and unite with the people of God. If you do not make a profession, I do not see how you can be found innocent of the charge of concealing the Lord's words.

When you have done that, keep yourself clear of sinful silence by very often speaking to others of the things of God. I was greatly pleased this week when a brother minister said to me, "A man has just joined our church, a rough man, who mixed in company that was not likely much to improve him, and yet he has been really made a new man. He was accustomed to go round to houses with small casks of beer for a large brewery, and among the rest he called at a certain house where the servant is a member at the Tabernacle. She had not seen him more than once or twice before she began to ask him whether he knew the Saviour, and to question him about his soul, and when he called each month she spoke to him again, till at last he who had never thought of religion, nor entered a place of worship at all, was brought to the feet of Jesus, and to become an honour to the church of which he is a member." This minister said, "I hope all your members do as that servant does." I told him I knew a great many of you did, but no doubt some of you did not. You who do not may well fidget upon your seats, as you take home the hint. Henceforth at every opportunity speak of Jesus to those around you, lest you be found guilty of concealing the words of the Holy One.

Some of you cannot *speak* very much because you are naturally diffident and slow of speech. Try and overcome the infirmity, but if you cannot do so, do not conceal the words of the Most High on that account, but write letters of personal entreaty. You can do this, cannot you? Some of you can write very well indeed, and write so much that you have to cross your letters, which is much easier for you to write than for friends to read. As you can write so well, do write for Jesus Christ. Do not cross your letter lest you conceal your meaning, but write earnestly and lovingly for Jesus. You can also circulate what has been written by other people, though I do not think it so good a thing to do as writing yourself. You may send tracts and sermons, but let them be such as you may hope that people will read. Sometimes you may write out part of a tract, and it will attract them all the more for being your own handwriting.

Another thing may be done. If you feel that when you have spoken and written you have still not done much, help other people who have

greater gifts. A great deal may be done by imitating Aquila and Priscilla, who helped Apollos. It is not given to everybody to preach to large numbers, or to preach at all, but you can often pick up a young man and say, "I will help him in his education and encourage him in his first efforts." You can always help young men by filling the offering box which supports the College.

I married a gentleman on this platform some time ago who said to me, "I wish I could preach; but I will tell you what I will do, I will keep a man to preach: I will find the money and you will find the man." I told him I must have him speak, too, as best he could. He said he would, but he wished to have somebody to speak better. Men of wealth should copy this example. Help the colporteurs, help the city missionaries, help all those who publish the word of the Lord.

And lastly, and this morning most to the point, there are the heathen perishing for lack of knowledge. Millions of voices call out of the darkness to you, "Come over and help us! You have the light, bring it to us! You have the bread, come and feed us! We perish, we perish, we perish." Brethren, the heathen are perishing. Will you let them perish? I wish that some young men here would go for missionaries. One of the leaders of a missionary society cheered my heart last week when he took out of his pocket an old sermon of mine, marked and crossed and scored. He said, "You will like to see that, Mr. Spurgeon." "What about it?" "That was given to me by a young man who has joined our mission. He read that sermon, and marked the passages which touched his heart, and now he is at work in China. I looked upon that sermon with great delight. I think I felt more pleased with that old sermon *than if I had received a wreath of gold.* I felt gratified that I had brought a young and fervent heart to devote itself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Give me like joy each of you; and if you cannot go among the heathen personally, help others to do so. Give this morning a liberal collection, and may God accept it at your hands for Christ's sake.

By C. H. Spurgeon.

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CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL KINGDOM, AND HOW IT COMETH.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 25TH, 1880, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."—Psalms ii. 8, 9.

OBSERVE, dear friends, the wonderful contrast between the violent excitement of the enemies of the Lord, and the sublime serenity of God himself. He is not disturbed though the heathen so furiously rage, and their kings and mighty ones set themselves in battle array. He smiles at them: he hath them in derision. You and I are often downcast and depressed, and our forebodings are dark and dismal, but God sits in his eternal peacefulness, and serenely overrules tumult and rebellion. The Lord reigneth, and his throne is not moved, nor his rest broken, whatever may be the noise and turmoil down below.

Notice the sublimity of this divine calm. While the heathen and their princes are plotting and planning how to break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from them, he has already defeated their devices, and he says to them, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." "You will not have my Son to reign over you, but nevertheless he reigns. While you have been raging I have crowned him. Your imaginations are indeed vain, for I have forestalled you, and established him upon his throne. Hear him as he proclaims my decree, and asserts his filial sovereignty." God is ever beforehand with his adversaries: they find their scheming frustrated, and their craft baffled, even before they have begun to execute their plans. By God's decree the ever blessed Son of the Highest is placed in power, and exalted to his throne. The rulers cannot snatch from his hand the sceptre, nor dash from his head the crown: Jesus reigns and must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. God has set him firmly upon Zion's sacred hill, and raging nations cannot cast him down: the very idea of their so doing excites the derision of Jehovah, he disturbs not his great soul because of their blustering. As if it were a banquet rather than a conflict, the Lord God, as himself a king, speaks to the King's Son, even to his Anointed on his right hand, and having owned his royal rank, confers upon him the highest honours. At great feasts many a monarch has been known to say to his favourite, "Ask what I shall give thee,

and nothing shall be denied thee this day." Even thus doth the great Father say to his glorious Son the Prince of Peace, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen, thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, thy possession." He bids him open his mouth wide, and request a boundless dominion. He will give him distant nations, yea, and the whole round earth to be his kingdom. There is an air of regal festivity and peaceful joy about all this which strangely contrasts with the uproar of the adversaries. Brethren, I wish we could enter in some measure into this sublime quiet. We may well be confident since God is so. If the Captain be assured of victory it behoves the common soldier to be bravely hopeful. The battle is the Lord's, and since he is the Lord God omnipotent, fear about the issue of the conflict is foolish and wicked. All events are in his hand—his hand who can dash whole worlds to dust, or make them when it pleases him. What can stand against the almighty will? Who shall say unto Jehovah, "What doest thou?" In this eternal all-sufficiency is our rest, and we may therefore cease from anxiety. Stand thou still, my weary brother, and see the salvation of God. Put not forth thy timorous hand to stay the trembling ark, but know that Jehovah can protect his own. Lay thy Martha cares aside: sit at thy Saviour's feet, and listen to his voice. He will tell thee that God reigneth yet, and that his anointed shall reign also. Things are not as they seem: all is well when all looks ill. If the heavens are clouded the sun is not put out: if the evening hath darkened, even to midnight, yet the morning cometh: to the moment shall it break, nor can all the powers of darkness hinder the dawning day. Jehovah's fixed decrees remain engraved as in eternal brass, nor can the craft of hell efface a single line nor stay the execution of a single purpose. Despite all opposition the sacred purpose will blossom into the actual providence, and the providence will ripen into salvation. God's plan will be carried out without failure in any point, and there is no cause for alarm.

If we were more calm and restful we should do our work better, for do we not gather both wisdom and courage when we abide in quietness and confidence? The joy of the Lord is the strength of his saints. The assurance of faith, if we were filled with it, would make us go forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Alas, our short-sighted fretfulness, our anxious mistrust, and our timorous suspicion cause us needless distress, weaken us for service, and expose us to the assaults of our adversaries. Without the preparation of the gospel of peace our feet are unshod, and we are unfit for the heavenly pilgrimage. Grovelling here below among the troubles of the hour, the most of Christians are a timorous folk, and act like the tribe of Reuben in the day of Barak's battle, to whom Deborah cried, "Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?" O ye who lie among the pots, and do servile work in abject fear, arise to a braver spirit. Up ye to the everlasting hills and breathe a purer air: gird yourselves with the belt of confidence in God, and you shall be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." May God grant that the subject of this morning may help us out of the depressing influences which surround us, and raise us into fellowship with the calm in which Jehovah sits smiling, and out of which he saith, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

Our text suggests to us this morning, first, that *the kingdoms of the earth, and the earth itself, are Christ's inheritance,*—"I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." Leave out those little words which the translators have inserted, for they but feebly help the sense. "I will give the heathen, thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, thy possession." When we have dwelt upon that we shall then notice *that this is to be had for the asking:* "Ask of me, and I shall give." Thirdly, we shall note that *the power by which the dominion shall be gained is altogether of God:* "I shall give." And fourthly, we shall remark that in order to complete the conquest of the world *all existing and all future confederacies against the Lord, and against his Christ, shall be utterly destroyed:* "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

I. For our comfort let us notice the teaching of the text that THE LORD WILL GIVE TO CHRIST THE HEATHEN AS HIS INHERITANCE AND THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH AS HIS POSSESSION. This I take to refer to our Lord as man. Already as God the kingdom of the divine Son ruleth over all. There never was a limit to the reign of Jesus as God, not even when he was hanging on the cross; he was the everlasting Father even when he was "the child born, the Son given."

It is in his wondrous nature as God-man Mediator that these words may be understood, for so the apostle Paul evidently interpreted them. The mysterious sentence, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," may refer to the deep and secret truth of the eternal filiation of our Lord, whatever that may be; but Paul quotes it in the thirteenth Acts as referring to his resurrection. Here are his words, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is in resurrection power that Christ comes forth, and God gives to him to have dominion over the earth and all that is upon it. Because he liveth and was dead he hath the keys of hell and of death. By virtue of his humiliation he reigns. For the suffering of death he is crowned with glory and honour. The heavenly host proclaim his worthiness to take the book and open its seven seals, singing, "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." He descended that he might ascend above all things and fill all things; he laid aside his glory that he might be crowned with this new glory and honour, and might have all things put under his feet as the Son of man. We speak therefore of Jesus Christ the risen One, who once died, but has now risen from the tomb, and quitted this earth for the splendours of the New Jerusalem.

Our conviction is that this same Jesus is to reign over the whole world. I shall not enter into the question whether this will be accomplished before his second advent, or will be the result of his glorious appearing. I should not like to assert that this consummation will be reached before his advent, for that might seem to militate against our duty to watch for his coming, which may be at any moment: on the other hand, I would not venture to assert that the gospel cannot be universally victorious before his coming, because I perceive that this opinion is a pillow for many an idle head, and is ruinous to the

hopeful spirit of missionary enterprise. It is enough for me that a wide dominion will be given to our Lord at some time or other, and that assuredly his kingdom shall embrace all the nations of mankind. The whole earth shall yet be filled with his glory; the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head and clear the world of his slimy trail.

For the next few minutes you will be so good as to keep your Bibles going, for the appeal must be to God's own word. I gather that the kingdom of Christ is to be so extensive as to comprehend all mankind, first, because, of the exceeding breadth of the prophecy of it which was made to Abraham in Genesis xii. 3. That is an old covenant promise which refers to Abraham as the father of the faithful, and to his one great seed, even Jesus, the promised Messiah. Here are the far-reaching words,—"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Assuredly they are not as yet all blessed in him to such an extent as to exhaust the divine meaning. When God in covenant promises a blessing it is no light thing, and therefore I am sure that this grand covenant blessing of the nations is something more than a name. Though I doubt not that the whole earth is to some extent the better because of the coming of Christ, and his peace-making death, and the spread of his pure faith, yet I cannot believe that multitudes who live and die in the thick darkness of ignorance and idolatry are really blessed in Christ in such a sense as to make it a covenant blessing. How much are Tartary, China, and Thibet blessed by the gospel? There must be something better yet for all the families of the earth than anything they have hitherto received. All the families of the earth shall yet know that the promised seed hath lived and died for them, and some of every kindred and tongue shall find salvation in him.

Jacob, too, when he spake concerning the Shiloh in Genesis xlix. 10, said, "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." By the people is not meant the seed of Israel, but the nations, or the Gentiles; so the Septuagint and the Syraic understand it, and so indeed it is. Jesus, our great Shiloh, sets up the standard, and his chosen rally around in ever growing numbers till the dispersed of Babel shall find in him a new centre, and a pure language shall be given to them in him. The words mean not "gathering" only, but a willing obedience, the fruit of faith and the expression of piety. To this is parallel the word of Paul in Romans xv. 12: "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." It is evident, then, that the nations shall come to trust in the Messiah, and thus shall they find life eternal.

Moses, too, in Deuteronomy xxxii. 21, to which passage Paul in the Romans so especially refers, speaks of the heathen nations when he says, "I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Truly this is fulfilled in these days when the gospel line hath gone out throughout all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the earth; and this our own foolish nation, this once barbarous people which seemed shut out from God, worshipping idols with all the cruel rites of the Druids, has been brought into covenant with God and made to rejoice in him. Degraded heathen in all lands have become believers, and so shall all nations be brought believingly to Jesus' feet, that Israel may be

angered and provoked to jealousy until her time shall come, when she shall look on him whom she hath pierced, and shall mourn for him, and turn to him with full purpose of heart.

When we reach the Psalms we come into the clear light of prophecy concerning the kingdom of our blessed Master. Our text stands first, and is sufficient in itself: the heathen are to be his inheritance, and the utmost bounds of the world are to be his possession. Turn to that famous passion psalm, the twenty-second. Its pathos with regard to the griefs of the crucified One is deep and touching. You see him hanging on the tree, a gazing-stock to scoffers, with his tongue cleaving to his jaws, and his heart melting like wax in the midst of his bowels; and yet ere the psalm closes the plaintive gives place to the triumphant, and the dying One cries, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul." On the cross this prospect cheered our dying Master's heart, that the kingdom should be the Lord's, and that all the kindreds of the nations should come and worship before him; let it cheer us also. Do you think that the crucified Lord will be disappointed of the end for which he died? Will you venture to assert that a single drop of his blood was shed for nought? Rest assured that he shall see of the travail of his soul, till even his great loving heart shall be content. God hath said it, "I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death;" and be ye calmly confident that the word of the Lord will stand.

Turn your Bibles over till you reach Psalm lxvi., and the fourth verse, and there you come upon another word of comfort: "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name." This sentence is not merely the passionate hope of an enthusiastic worshipper, but a voice inspired of the Holy Spirit, plainly declaring that all peoples shall adore their Maker with hearty praise and joyful song.

How glowing is the language of Psalm lxxii. Can we expect too great things for our king when we remember the gracious words beginning at the eighth verse: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." Read on at verse seventeen: "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." These terms include the most barbarous tribes that exist, and they specially mention nations which boast that they were never conquered: such as the untamed rovers of the wilderness, who centuries ago laughed at the Roman power. The legions which subdued all other peoples could not conquer the sons of Ishmael; fleet of foot as a hart, swift as a young roe, they fled over the desert sands, out of reach of the pursuer; yet these shall bow before our Lord, and joyfully pay him homage. He will sway

his sceptre where sceptre was never owned before; he shall set up a throne where all other authority has been laughed to scorn.

You will not be wearied if I ask you to look at Psalm lxxxvi. verse 9. There you will find it written, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." It is not to be mere outside worship that shall be paid, for the nations are to glorify his name, which is a high form of praise. All nations are to glorify the Lord, and this they have not done as yet.

We expected to find, and we are not disappointed in our expectation, that Isaiah would be sure to speak concerning these things. I would rather you heard the word of God by far than my word, and therefore we will keep to our reading. It will bring you encouragement and heart-cheer to know what prophets said in the olden time, when only Israel had the light. They did not think the light would be confined to the one peculiar people, but they expected that on the nations which sat in darkness light would break, and they also would seek the Lord. Turn to Isaiah and read. See what he says in his second chapter. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." I can but give samples. The passages abound all through Isaiah in which there is the intimation of the general spread of the Redeemer's kingdom. Turn to Isaiah xlix. 6: "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy one of Israel, and he shall choose thee." (v. 12.) "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee."

Nor is Isaiah alone in such prophecies as these. I cannot detain you by reading what Ezekiel saith concerning the ever deepening waters which shall carry life to all lands; and I will only mention one word of Jeremiah, because it so peculiarly proves that the homage paid by heathen nations to our Lord will be that of their hearts; and that the reign of Christ, whatever it may be else, will certainly be a spiritual reign. Jeremiah iii. 17: "They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." Christ will work a heart-change when he

shall win the nations to allegiance, and this shall lead to a manifest change of life,—"neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

Daniel, that John of the Old Testament, of course saw more clearly than any the coming kingdom of the Anointed One. What doth he say in chapter vii. 18? "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Can anything be more positive than this last word?

Look how the idols are to be destroyed according to the prophet Zephaniah (ii. 11): "The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." Zechariah says to the same effect (ix. 10): "He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." (xiv. 2) "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one."

Lest I should weary you, I forbear to quote any more. To me it is evident beyond all contradiction that according to the whole run of Scripture the kingdom of Christ is to extend over all parts of the earth, and over all races and conditions of men, and therefore I charge you never despair for the grand old cause. An infidel notion is abroad that these different religions have sprung up at different times as developments of the religious instinct, and that they may all profitably exist side by side with ours. It is admitted that the religion of Christ is excellent, and that it deserves a large following, but still other religions have their advantages and must not be despised: nay, something better than the gospel of Christ may yet be discovered. This is the current talk in certain circles, and we would at once express our horror at it. Jesus is not to share a divided throne. Cast ye with abhorence from your souls every such blasphemous thought. Jesus must reign till all enemies are put under his feet, and to him all rivals are enemies. If Jesus be King he is the only Potentate. Christians are enlisted under a banner which does not brook another standard side by side with it, they serve a prince who will not share dominion with others, who will not submit that even a province shall be rent away from his government. He shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Like a burst of thunder let all hearts that love him say, Amen.

II. It appears from our text that THIS UNIVERSAL DOMINION IS TO BE ASKED FOR. Thus saith the Father to his glorious Son, "Ask of me, and I will give thee." Beloved, Jesus fails not to ask. We do not doubt that he responds to the Father's invitation, and asks for his inheritance. This is the way in which the psalm before us touches upon the priestly character of Christ as combined with his kingly office. He ever liveth to intercede, and a part of his daily intercession is to ask that the heathen may be his inheritance. Now, beloved, this is a lesson to us,

We belong to Christ; we are members of that body of which he is the mystical Head, and it is ours to act with him in his life-work: as he asks, we are to ask with him. As Jesus suffers in his people, so he pleads in them. Let us cry day and night unto God for the coming and kingdom of our Lord. Let the throne of the Highest be surrounded by our perpetual prayers. Let us urge for the Lord Jesus his suit in the courts above, that the heathen may be his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession. We are so truly one with him that his sympathies and hopes are ours; his glory is our glory, his victory our victory, and therefore our supplications should naturally and spontaneously arise for him every day of our lives. Our union with him has given us a kingdom, the same kingdom as that which he claims. He himself has said it: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." As surely as he sets his Son upon his holy hill of Zion, so surely will the Lord bring us all there. Our prayers therefore should daily rise together with the pleadings of the great Intercessor himself. O Lord, thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory; let thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

This prayer is one which is commanded by God himself. About its fitness we can, therefore, have no doubt. Your Saviour taught you to say, "Thy kingdom come." In this text we find it prescribed as a prayer to the Well-beloved,—"Ask of me"; and therefore it is certainly a proper prayer for us, and we may use it without question. We are highly honoured in being permitted to present such a petition: to be allowed to pray for myself is mercy, to be permitted to pray for my fellow man is favour, but to be suffered to pray for Jesus is honour. It is written, "Prayer also shall be made for him continually," and thus there is a special honour put upon those who intercede. My Lord's prayer for me saves me; but when he bids me pray for him, he dignifies me, and I say with David, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Whatever else we forget, never from our private intercessions let us omit the prayer that the heathen may come to glorify Christ.

It is a joy to know that this prayer will be effectual to the full. It is no vain desire, no dream of a fevered brain: the infinite wisdom of God himself suggests it, for he says, "Ask, and I shall give thee." This union of precept and promise is found attached to every covenant blessing, but here it is conspicuously and distinctly stated in so many words—"Ask, and I shall give thee." Concerning this thing the promise of God is definite, we may therefore pray with full assurance. Let us avail ourselves of this plain direction every hour of our lives. O church of God, ask on Christ's behalf, and the Lord God will give him the kingdom. Heir of heaven, ask on behalf of the Elder Brother, for the Elder Brother pleads in thee, and God will hear both thee and him, and he will grant the united request. My heart is full of confidence when pleading upon this subject: what surer warrant do we want than "Ask, and I shall give thee"?

Let our prayer be wide and far-reaching. Let our desires embrace the world. Pray not for your own country only, though it needs it, and God alone knows how much; but pray for the colonies, the continent, and the far off lands. Ask that all heathens may become Christians. Plead that the whole round earth may be the Lord's: that the uttermost

parts of the earth may resound with songs in his praise. On this earth his blood has fallen; the precious drops could not be gathered up again, and so this globe remains blood-marked,—the one star upon which the Son of God poured out his life. It must be the Lord's: the sacrifice of Calvary has made it sacred to the Son of God. As our Government marks with the broad arrow those stores which belong to it, so did Christ upon the tree, when the blood fell from his hands, and feet, and side, mark, as it were, with something more full of meaning than the broad arrow, this round earth on which he bled, and it must be for ever and ever his by right of purchase and ransom. It was made subject to vanity for a little season, but it is to be redeemed from it; and when it shall be purified and beautified in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, you will not know it: for it will come forth as "a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Its sister stars have long wondered at its silence, or its discord, but at the sight of its restoration to the choirs of holiness they will sing in deep delight, and chant a new song unto the Lord. With what admiration will they perceive, rising up from this once beclouded orb, a flame of unquenchable praise with pillars of perfumed smoke, the incense of eternal gratitude. Sweeter the offering of this once fallen world than that of any other sphere, for it has been redeemed, and upon it have been seen marvels of free grace and dying love such as no other world has known. Oh, may this soon come to pass; may the prayer be heard; and God be praised; but it can only be accomplished through his own appointed method, the asking of Christ, the pleading of the church. Oh, rouse thee, church, to ask. Awake thee from thine unholy lethargy, and cry day and night unto God. Cease not, but with anguish, like a woman in travail, cry aloud and spare not, until he give the risen Lord the heathen for his inheritance, and make his throne higher than the kings of the earth.

III. Thirdly, THIS DOMINION IS TO BE GAINED BY THE POWER OF GOD. Notice the text, for it is very explicit: "Ask of me, and *I shall give thee*." The power and grace of God will be conspicuously seen in the subjugation of this world to Christ: every heart shall know that it was wrought by the power of God in answer to the prayer of Christ and his church. I believe, brethren, that the length of time spent in the accomplishment of the divine plan has much of it been occupied with getting rid of those many forms of human power which have intruded into the place of the Spirit. If you and I had been about in our Lord's day, and could have had everything managed to our hand, we should have converted Cæsar straight away by argument or by oratory; we should then have converted all his legions by every means within our reach; and, I warrant you, with Cæsar and his legions at our back we would have Christianised the world in no time: would we not? Yes, but that is not God's way at all, nor the right and effectual way to set up a spiritual kingdom. Bribes and threats are alike unlawful, eloquence and carnal reasoning are out of court, the power of divine love is the one weapon for this campaign. Long ago the prophet wrote, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The fact is that such conversions as could be brought about by physical force, or by mere mental energy, or by the prestige of rank and pomp, are not

conversions at all. The kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of this world, else would his servants fight; it rests on a spiritual basis, and is to be advanced by spiritual means. Yet Christ's servants gradually slipped down into the notion that his kingdom was of this world, and could be upheld by human power. A Roman emperor professed to be converted, using a deep policy to settle himself upon the throne; then Christianity became the State-patronized religion: it seemed that the world was Christianized, whereas, indeed, the church was heathenized. Hence sprang the monster of a State-church, a conjunction ill-assorted, and fraught with untold ills. This incongruous thing is half human, half divine: as a theory it fascinates, as a fact it betrays; it promises to advance the truth, and is itself a negation of it. Under its influences a system of religion was fashioned, which beyond all false religions, and beyond even Atheism itself, is the greatest hindrance to the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Under its influence dark ages lowered over the world; men were not permitted to think; a Bible could scarcely be found, and a preacher of the gospel, if found, was put to death. That was the result of human power coming in with the sword in one hand and the gospel in the other, and developing its pride of ecclesiastical power into a triple crown, an Inquisition, and an infallible Pope. This parasite, this canker, this incubus of the church will be removed by the grace of God, and by his providence in due season. The kings of the earth who have loved this unchaste system will grow weary of it and destroy it. Read Revelation xvii. 16, and see how terrible her end will be. The death of the system will come from those who gave it life: the powers of earth created the system, and they will in due time destroy it.

Frequently do we meet with the idea that the world is to be converted to Christ by the spread of civilization. Now, civilization always follows the gospel, and is in a great measure the product of it; but many people put the cart before the horse, and make civilization the first cause. According to their opinion trade is to regenerate the nations, the arts are to ennoble them, and education is to purify them. Peace Societies are formed, against which I have not a word to say, but much in their favour; still, I believe the only efficient peace society is the church of God, and the best peace teaching is the love of God in Christ Jesus. The grace of God is the great instrument for uplifting the world from the depths of its ruin, and covering it with happiness and holiness. Christ's cross is the Pharos of this tempestuous sea, like the Eddystone lighthouse flinging its beams through the midnight of ignorance over the raging waters of human sin, preserving men from rock and shipwreck, piloting them into the port of peace. Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord reigneth from the tree; and as ye tell it out believe that the power to make the peoples believe it is with God the Father, and the power to bow them before Christ is in God the Holy Ghost. Saving energy lies not in learning, nor in wit, nor in eloquence, nor in anything save in the right arm of God, who will be exalted among the heathen, for he hath sworn that surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God. The might of the Omnipotent One shall work out his purposes of grace, and as for us, we will use the simple processes of prayer and faith. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee." Oh, that we could keep in perpetual motion the machinery of prayer. Pray, pray, pray,

and God will give, give, give, abundantly, and supernaturally, above all that we ask, or even think. He must do all things in the conquering work of the Lord Jesus. We cannot convert a single child, nor bring to Christ the humblest peasant, nor lead to peace the most hopeful youth; all must be done by the Spirit of God alone, and if ever nations are to be born in a day, and crowds are to come humbly to Jesus' feet, it is thine, Eternal Spirit, thine to do it. God must give the dominion, or the rebels will remain unsubdued.

IV. Thus the power of God worketh to bring about the kingdom of Christ; and THIS INVOLVES THE BREAKING UP OF ALL THE CONFEDERACIES WHICH NOW EXIST OR EVER SHALL EXIST FOR THE HINDRANCE OF THE REDEEMER'S KINGDOM.

Our text employs a figure which is very full of meaning. "He shall break them with a rod of iron." He breaks not the subject nations, nor the inherited heathen, but the kings of the earth who stood up and took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed. Against these he will lift up his iron rod of stern justice and irresistible power. Over his own inheritance he will sway a silver sceptre of love; over his own possession he shall reign with gentleness and grace; but as for his adversaries, he will deal with them in severity, and display his power in them. How shall they stand out against him? They have formed their confederacy with great care and skill: as when men prepare clay and make it plastic for the potter's use, so have they made all things ready; they have set their design upon the wheel, and caused it to revolve in their thoughts, and with great skill they have fashioned it. Lo, there it stands finished, and fair to look upon. Yet at its very best it is nothing more than a potter's vessel. It may be of the purest clay, and of such exquisite workmanship that it shall enchant every man of taste, but it attaineth to be nothing more than an earthen vessel, and therefore woe unto it when the rod of iron falls upon it. Woe to all human societies and brotherhoods which are framed to resist the Lord. Mark the conflict and its end! It is brief enough. A stroke! Where is the hope of the Lord's adversary? Gone, gone, utterly gone; only a few potsherds remain. Oh for such a smiting of the apostacy of Rome! Oh for one touch of the iron rod upon the imposture of Mohammed! Oh, for a blow at Buddhism, and a back stroke at the superstition of Brahminism, and at all the idols of the heathen! Woe unto the gods of the land of Sinim in that day; a single stroke shall set the potsherds flying. Wherefore, then, should we fear, although they plot and plan; although a solemn conclave of cardinals be held, though the Pope fulminate his bulls, though the Sultan ordain that every convert to Christianity shall be put to death, though still the scoffers revile at Christianity, and say that it spreads not as once it did? A speedy answer shall confound them, or if not speedy yet the stroke shall be sure. Our King waits a while. He hath leisure. Haste belongs to weakness; his strength moves calmly. Only let him be aroused and you shall see how quick are his paces. He redeemed the world in a few short hours upon the tree, and I warrant you that when he getteth that iron rod once fairly to work he will not need many days to ease him of his adversaries, and make a clean sweep of all that set themselves against him. If you want to see how it will be done, read, I

pray you, Daniel ii. 31 :—"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." It was a strange conglomeration: all the metallic empires are set forth as combined in one image; which image is the embodied idea of monarchical power, which has fascinated men even to this day. The prophet goes on to say, "Thou sawest still that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." And so it is to be: the vision is being each day fulfilled. The gospel stone, which owes nothing to human strength or wisdom, is breaking the image, and scattering all opposing powers. No system, society, confederacy, or cabinet can stand which is opposed to truth and righteousness. I, even I, that am but of yesterday, and know nothing, have seen one of the mightiest of empires of modern times melt away on a sudden as the rime of the morning in the heat of the sun. I have seen monarchs driven out of their tyrannies by the powers of a single man, and a free nation born as in an hour. I have seen states which fought to hold the negro in perpetual captivity subdued by those whom they despised, while the slave has been set free. I have seen nations chastened under evil governments, and revived when the yoke has been broken, and they have returned to the way of righteousness and peace. He who lives longest shall see most of this. Evil is short-lived. Truth shall yet rise above all. The Lord saith, overturn, overturn till he shall come whose right it is, and God shall give it him. Woe unto those that stand against the Lord and his anointed, for they shall not prosper. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

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A HEAVENLY PATTERN FOR OUR EARTHLY LIFE.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, APRIL 30TH, 1884, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT EXETER-HALL.

Being the Annual Sermon of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matthew vi. 10.

OUR Father's will shall certainly be done, for the Lord "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." Let us adoringly consent that it shall be so, desiring no alteration therein. That "will" may cost us dear; yet let it never cross our wills: let our minds be wholly subjugated to the mind of God. That "will" may bring us bereavement, sickness, and loss; but let us learn to say, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." We should not only yield to the divine will, but acquiesce in it so as to rejoice in the tribulation which it ordains. This is a high attainment, but we set ourselves to reach it. He that taught us this prayer used it himself in the most unrestricted sense. When the bloody sweat stood on his face, and all the fear and trembling of a man in anguish were upon him, he did not dispute the decree of the Father, but bowed his head and cried, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." When we are called to suffer bereavements personally, or when, as a holy brotherhood, we see our best men taken away, let us know that it is well, and say most sincerely, "The will of the Lord be done."

God knows what will best minister to his gracious designs. To us it seems a sad waste of human life that man after man should go to a malarious region, and perish in the attempt to save the heathen: but infinite wisdom may view the matter very differently. We ask why the Lord does not work a miracle, and cover the heads of his messengers from the death-shaft? No reason is revealed to us, but there is a reason, for the will of the great Father is the sum of wisdom. Reasons are not made known to us, else were there no scope for our faith; and the Lord loves that this noble grace should have ample room and verge enough. Our God wastes no consecrated life: he has made nothing in vain: he ordains all things according to the counsel of his will, and that counsel never errs. Could the Lord endow us with his own omniscience, we should not only consent to the deaths of his servants, but should

deprecate their longer life. The same would also be true of our own living or dying. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"; and therefore we are sure that he does not afflict us by bereavement without a necessity of love. We must still see one missionary after another cut down in his prime; for there are arguments with God, as convincing with him as they are obscure to us, which require that by heroic sacrifice the foundations of the African church should be laid. Lord, we do not ask thee to explain thy reasons to us. Thou canst screen us from a great temptation by hiding thyself; for if even now we sin by asking reasons, we might soon go further, and provoke thee sorely by contending against thy reasons. He who demands a reason of God is not in a fit state to receive one. In the case of the honoured men whom the Lord has removed from us this year, there is assuredly no loss to the great cause as it is viewed by the eye of God. See the great stones and costly stones laboriously brought from the quarry to the edge of the sea! Can it be possible that these are deliberately thrown into the deep? It swallows them up! Wherefore is so much labour thrown away? These living stones might surely have been built into a temple for the Lord; why should the waves of death engulf them? Yet more are sought for, and still more: will the hungry abyss never cease to devour? Alas, that so much precious material should be lost! It is not lost. No, not a stone of it. Thus the Lord layeth the foundation of his harbour of refuge among the people. "Mercy shall be built up for ever." In due time massive walls shall rise out of the deep, and we shall no longer ask the reason for the losses of early days.

Peace be to the memories of the heroic dead! Men die that the cause may live. "Father, thy will be done." With this prayer upon our lips let us bend low in child-like submission to the will of the great Jehovah, and then gird up our loins anew to dauntless perseverance in our holy service. Though more should be taken away next year, and the next, yet we must pray on, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

My heart is grieved for the death of the beloved Hartley, and those noble men who preceded him to "the white man's grave." I had seen *him* especially, for it had been a joy to assist him for three years in preparing for missionary service. Alas! the preparation led to small visible results. He left us, he landed, and he died. Surely the Lord means to make further use of him; if he did not make him a preacher to the natives, he must intend that he should preach to us. I may say of each fallen missionary, "He being dead yet speaketh." "Faithful unto death," they inspire us by their example. Dying without regret in the cause of such a Master, they remind us of our own indebtedness to him. Their spirits rising to his throne are links between this Society and the glorified assembly above. Let not our thoughts go downward to their graves, but rise upward to their thrones. Does not our text point with a finger of flame from earth to heaven? Do not the dear departed ones mark a line of light between the two worlds?

If the prayer of our text had not been dictated by the Lord Jesus himself, we might think it too bold. Can it ever be that this earth, a mere drop of a bucket, should touch the great sea of life and light above and not be lost in it? Can it remain earth and yet be made like to heaven? Will it not lose its individuality in the process? This earth is subject

to vanity, dimmed with ignorance, defiled with sin, furrowed with sorrow; can holiness dwell in it as in heaven? Our Divine Instructor would not teach us to pray for impossibilities; he puts such petitions into our mouths as can be heard and answered. Yet certainly this is a great prayer; it has the hue of the infinite about it. Can earth be tuned to the harmonies of heaven? Has not this poor planet drifted too far away to be reduced to order and made to keep rank with heaven? Is it not swathed in mist too dense to be removed? Can its grave-clothes be loosed? Can thy will, O God, be done in earth as it is in heaven? It can be, and it must be; for a prayer wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit is ever the shadow of a coming blessing, and he that taught us to pray after this manner did not mock us with vain words. It is a brave prayer, which only a heaven-born faith can utter; yet it is not the offspring of presumption, for presumption never longs for the will of the Lord to be perfectly performed.

I. May the Holy Spirit be with us, while I first lead you to observe that THE COMPARISON IS NOT FAR-FETCHED. That our present obedience to God should be like to that of holy ones above is not a strained and fanatical notion. It is not far-fetched, *for earth and heaven were called into being by the same Creator.* The empire of the Maker comprehends the upper and the lower regions. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's"; and "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." He sustaineth all things by the word of his power both in heaven above and in the earth beneath. Jesus reigneth both among angels and men, for he is Lord of all. If, then, heaven and earth were created by the same God, and are sustained by the same power, and governed from the same throne, we believe that the same end will be subserved by each of them, and that both heaven and earth shall tell out the glory of God. They are two bells of the same chime, and this is the music that peals forth from them: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah!" If earth were of the devil and heaven were of God, and two self-existent powers were contending for the mastery, we might question whether earth would ever be as pure as heaven; but as our ears have twice heard the divine declaration, "Power belongeth unto God," we expect to see that power triumphant, and the dragon cast out from earth as well as heaven. Why should not every part of the great Creator's handiwork become equally radiant with his glory? He that made can remake. The curse which fell upon the ground was not eternal; thorns and thistles pass away. God will bless the earth for Christ's sake even as once he cursed it for man's sake.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." *It was so once.* Perfect obedience to the heavenly will upon this earth will only be a return to the good old times which ended at the gate of Eden. There was a day when no gulf was digged between earth and heaven; there was scarce a boundary line, for the God of heaven walked in Paradise with Adam. All things on earth were then pure, and true, and happy. It was the garden of the Lord. Alas, that the trail of the serpent has now defiled everything. Then earth's morning song was heard in heaven, and heaven's hallelujahs floated down to earth at eventide. Those who desire to set up the kingdom of God are not instituting a new order of things; they are restoring, not inventing. Earth will drop into the old

groove again. The Lord is King: and he has never left the throne. As it was in the beginning so shall it be yet again. History shall, in the divinest sense, repeat itself. The temple of the Lord shall be among men, and the Lord God shall dwell among them. "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." *It will be so at the last.* I shall not venture far into prophecy. Some brethren are quite at home where I should lose myself. I have scarcely yet been able to get out of the gospels and the epistles; and that deep book of Revelation, with its waters to swim in, I must leave to better instructed minds. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of that book;" to that blessing I would aspire, but I cannot yet make claim to interpret it. This much, however, seems plain,—there is to be "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This creation, which now "groaneth and travaileth in pain," in sympathy with man, is to be brought forth from its bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Blessed be the Lord Christ, when he brought his people out of their bondage, he did not redeem their spirits only, but their bodies also: hence their material part is the Lord's as well as their spiritual nature, and hence again this very earth which we inhabit shall be uplifted in connection with us. The creation itself shall be delivered. Materialism, out of which there has been once made a vesture for the Godhead in the person of Christ, shall become a fit temple for the Lord of hosts. The New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride is prepared for her husband. We are sure of this. Therefore unto this consummation let us strive mightily, praying evermore, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Meanwhile, remember also that *there is an analogy between earth and heaven*, so that the one is the type of the other. You could not describe heaven except by borrowing the things of earth to symbolize it; and this shows that there is a real likeness between them. What is heaven? It is Paradise, or a garden. Walk amid your fragrant flowers and think of heaven's bed of spices. Heaven is a kingdom: thrones, and crowns, and palms are the earthly emblems of the heavenlies. Heaven is a city; and there, again, you fetch your metaphor from the dwelling-places of men. It is a place of "many mansions"—the homes of the glorified. Houses are of earth, yet is God our dwelling-place. Heaven is a wedding-feast; and even such is this present dispensation. The tables are spread here as well as there; and it is our privilege to go forth and bring in the hedge-birds and the highwaymen, that the banqueting-hall may be filled. While the saints above eat bread in the marriage supper of the Lamb, we do the like below in another sense.

Between earth and heaven there is but a thin partition. The home country is much nearer than we think. I question if "the land that is very far off" be a true name for heaven. Was it not an extended kingdom on earth which was intended by the prophet rather than the celestial home? Heaven is by no means the far country, for it is the Father's house. Are we not taught to say, "Our Father which art in heaven"? Where the Father is the true spirit of adoption counts itself near. Our Lord would have us mingle heaven with earth by naming it twice in this short prayer. See how he makes us familiar

with heaven by mentioning it next to our usual food, making the next petition to be, "Give us this day our daily bread." This does not look as if it should be thought of as a remote region. Heaven, is at any rate, so near that in a moment we can speak with him that is King of the place, and he will answer to our call. Yea, before the clock shall tick again you and I may be there. Can that be a far-off country which we can reach so soon? Oh, brothers, we are within hearing of the shining ones; we are well-nigh home. A little while and we shall see our Lord. Perhaps another day's march will bring us within the city gate. And what if another fifty years of life on earth should remain, what is it but the twinkling of an eye?

Clear enough is it that the comparison between the obedience of earth and that of heaven is not far-fetched. If heaven and heaven's God be, in truth, so near to us, our Lord has set before us a homely model taken from our heavenly dwelling-place. The petition only means—let all the children of the one Father be alike in doing his will.

II. Secondly, THIS COMPARISON IS EMINENTLY INSTRUCTIVE. Does it not teach us that *what* we do for God is not everything, but *how* we do it is also to be considered? The Lord Jesus Christ would not only have us do the Father's will, but do it after a certain model. And what an elevated model it is! Yet is it none too elevated, for we would not wish to render to our heavenly Father service of an inferior kind. If none of us dare say that we are perfect, we are yet resolved that we will never rest until we are. If none of us dare hope that even our holy things are without a flaw, yet none of us will be satisfied while a spot remains upon them. We would give to our God the utmost conceivable glory. Let the mark be as high as possible. If we do not as yet reach it, we will aim higher and yet higher. We do not desire that our pattern should be lowered, but that our imitation should be raised.

"Thy will *be done* in earth, as it is in heaven." Mark the words "*be done*," for they touch a vital point of the text. God's will is *done* in heaven. How very practical! On earth his will is often forgotten, and his rule ignored. In the church of the present age there is a desire to be doing something for God, but few enquire what he wills them to do. Many things are done for the evangelizing of the people which were never commanded by the great Head of the Church, and cannot be approved of by him. Can we expect that he will accept or bless that which he has never commanded? Will-worship is as sin in his sight. We are to do his will in the first place, and then to expect a blessing upon the doing of that will. My brethren, I am afraid that Christ's will on earth is very much more discussed than done. I have heard of brethren spending days in disputing upon a precept which their dispute was breaking. In heaven they have no disputes, but they do the will of God without discord. We are best employed when we are actually doing something for this fallen world, and for the glory of our Lord. "Thy will be done": we must come to actual works of faith and labours of love. Too often we are satisfied with having approved of that will, or with having spoken of it in words of commendation. But we must not stay in thought, resolve, or word; the prayer is practical and business-like, "Thy will be *done* in earth, as it is in heaven." An idle man stretched himself on his bed when the

sun had risen high in heaven, and as he rolled over, he muttered to himself that he wished this were hard work, for he could do any quantity of it with pleasure. Many might wish that to think and to speak were to *do* the will of God; for then they would have effected it very thoroughly. Up yonder there is no playing with sacred things: they do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Would God his will were not alone preached and sung below, but actually *done* as it is in heaven.

In heaven the will of God is done *in spirit*, for they are spirits there. It is done *in truth* with undivided heart, and unquestioned desire. On earth, too often, it is done and yet not done; for a dull formality mocks real obedience. Here obedience often shades off into dreary routine. We sing with the lips, but our hearts are silent. We pray as if the mere utterance of words were prayer. We sometimes preach living truth with dead lips. It must no longer be so. Would God we had the fire and fervour of those burning ones who behold the face of God. We pray in that sense, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." I hope there is a revival of spiritual life among us, and that, to a large extent, our brotherhood is instinct with fervour; but there is room for far more of zeal. Ye that know how to pray, go down upon your knees, and with the warm breath of prayer arouse the spark of spiritual life until it becomes a flame. With all the powers of our innermost being, with the whole life of God within us, let us be stirred up to do the will of the Lord on earth as it is done in heaven.

In heaven they do God's will *constantly, without failure.* Would God it could be so here! We are aroused to-day, but we fall asleep to-morrow. We are diligent for one hour, but sluggish the next. This must not be, dear friends. We must be steadfast, unmovable—always abounding in the work of the Lord. We need to pray for sacred perseverance, that we may imitate the days of heaven upon the earth by doing the Lord's will without a break.

They do God's will in heaven *universally, without making a selection.* Here men pick and choose—take this commandment to be obeyed, and lay that commandment by as non-essential. We are, I fear, all tinctured, more or less, with with this odious gall. A certain part of obedience is hard, and therefore we try to forget it. It must no longer be so; but whatsoever Jesus saith unto us we must do. Partial obedience is actual disobedience. The loyal subject respects the whole law. If anything be the will of the Lord, we have no choice in the matter, the choice is made by our Lord. Let us pray that we may neither misunderstand the Lord's will, nor forget it, nor violate it. Perhaps we are, as a company of believers, ignorantly omitting a part of the Lord's will, and this may have been hindering our work these many years; possibly there is something written by the pen of inspiration which we have not read, or something read that we have not practised; and this may hold back the arm of the Lord from working. We should often make diligent search, and go through our churches to see wherein we differ from the divine pattern. Some goodly Babylonish garment or wedge of gold may be as an accursed thing in the camp, bringing disaster to the Lord's armies. Let us not neglect anything which our God commands lest he withhold his blessing.

His will is done in heaven *instantly, and without hesitation.* We, I

fear, are given to delays. We plead that we must look the thing round about. "Second thoughts are best," we say, whereas the first thoughts of eager love are the prime production of our being. I would that we were obedient at all hazard, for therein lies the truest safety. Oh, to do what God bids us, as God bids us, on the spot, and at the moment! It is not ours to debate, but to perform. Let us dedicate ourselves as perfectly as Esther consecrated herself when she espoused the cause of her people, and said, "If I perish, I perish." We must not consult with flesh and blood, or make a reserve for our own selfishness, but at once most vigorously follow the divine command.

Let us pray the Lord that we may do his will on earth as it is done in heaven; that is, *joyfully, without the slightest weariness.* When our hearts are right, it is a glad thing to serve God, though it be only to unloose the latchets of our Master's shoes. To be employed by Jesus in service which will bring us no repute, but much reproach, should be our delight. If we were altogether as we should be, sorrow for Christ's sake would be joy: ay, we should have joy right along, in dark nights as well as in bright days. Even as they are glad in heaven, with a felicity born of the presence of the Lord, so should we be glad, and find our strength in the joy of the Lord.

In heaven the will of the Lord is done *right humbly.* There perfect purity is set in a frame of lowliness. Too often we fall into self-gratulation, and it defiles our best deeds. We whisper to ourselves, "I did that very well." We flatter ourselves that there was no self in our conduct, but while we are laying that flattering unction to our souls, we are lying, as our self-contentment proves. God might have allowed us to do ten times as much, had he not known that it would not be safe. He cannot set us upon the pinnacle, because our heads are weak, and we grow dizzy with pride. We must not be permitted to be rulers over many things, for we should become tyrants if we had the opportunity. Brother, pray the Lord to keep thee low at his feet, for in no other place canst thou be largely used of him.

The comparison being thus instructive, I pray that we may be the better for our meditation upon it. I do not find it an easy thing even to describe the model; but if we essay to copy it: "this is the work; this is the difficulty." Unless we are girded with the divine strength we shall never do the will of God as it is done in heaven. Here is a greater labour than those of Hercules, bringing with it victories nobler than those of Alexander. To this the unaided wisdom of Solomon could not attain; the Holy Ghost must transform us, and lead the earthly in us captive to the heavenly.

III. Thirdly, I beg you to notice, dear friends, that THIS COMPARISON of holy service on earth to that which is in heaven, IS BASED UPON FACTS. The facts will both comfort and stimulate us. Two places are mentioned in the text which seem very dissimilar, and yet the likeness exceeds the unlikeness—earth and heaven.

Why should not saints do the will of the Lord on earth as their brethren do it in heaven? What is heaven but the Father's house, wherein there are many mansions? Do we not abide in that house even now? The Psalmist said, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee." Have we not often said of our Bethels, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of

heaven"? The spirit of adoption causes us to be at home with God even while we sojourn here below. Let us therefore do the will of God at once.

We have the same fare on earth as the saints in heaven, for "the Lamb in the midst of the throne doth feed them:" he is the Shepherd of his flock below, and daily feeds us upon himself. His flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed. Whence come the refreshing draughts of the immortals? The Lamb doth lead them to living fountains of waters; and doth he not even here below say to us, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"? The same river of the water of life which makes glad the city of our God above, also waters the garden of the Lord below.

Brethren, we are in the same company below as they enjoy above. Up there they are with Christ, and here he is with us, for he hath said—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." There is a difference as to the brightness of his presence; but not as to the reality of it. Thus you see we are partakers of the same privileges as the shining ones within the city gates. The church below is a chamber of the one great house, and the partition which separates it from the church above is a mere veil, of inconceivable thinness. Wherefore should we not do the Lord's will on earth as it is done in heaven?

"But heaven is a place of peace," says one; "there they rest from their labours." Beloved, our estate here is not without its peace and rest. "Alas," cries one, "I find it far otherwise." I know it. But whence come wars and fightings but of our fretfulness and unbelief? "We which have believed do enter into rest." That is not in all respects a fair allegory which represents us as crossing the Jordan of death to enter into Canaan. No, my brethren, believers are in Canaan now; how else could we say that the Canaanite is still in the land? We have entered upon the promised heritage, and we are warring for the full possession of it. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I for one do not feel like a lone dove flying over waters dark, seeking rest for the sole of her foot. No, I have found my Noah: Jesus has given me rest. There is a difference between the best estate of earth and the glory of heaven, but the rest which every soul may have that learns to conquer its will, is most deep and real. Brethren, having rest already, and being participators of the joy of the Lord, why should we not serve God on earth as they do in heaven?

"But we have not their victory," cries one, "for they are more than conquerors." Yes, and "our warfare is accomplished." We have prophetic testimony to that fact. Moreover, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." In the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord giveth us the victory, and maketh us to triumph in every place. We are warring; but we are of good cheer, for Jesus has overcome the world, and we also overcome by his blood. Ever is this our war-cry, "Victory! Victory!" The Lord will tread Satan under our feet shortly. Why should we not do the Lord's will on earth as it is done in heaven?

Heaven is the place of fellowship with God, and this is a blessed feature in its joy; but in this we are now participators, for "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." The fellowship of the Holy Ghost is with us all; it is our joy and our delight.

Having communion with the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are uplifted and sanctified, and it is becoming that by us the will of the Lord should be done on earth as it is in heaven.

"Up there," says a brother, "they are all accepted, but here we are in a state of probation." Did you read that in the Bible? for I never did. A believer is in no state of probation; he has passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. We are already "accepted in the Beloved," and that acceptance is so given as never to be reversed. The Redeemer brought us up out of the horrible pit of probation, and he has set our feet on the rock of salvation, and there he has established our goings. "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." Wherefore should we not, as the accepted of the Lord, do his will on earth as it is done in heaven?

"Ay," saith one, "but heaven is the place of perfect service; for 'his servants shall serve him.'" But is not this the place, in some respects, of a more extensive service still? Are there not many things which perfect saints above and holy angels cannot do? If we had choice of a sphere in which we could serve God with widest range, we should choose not heaven but earth. There are no slums and over-crowded rooms in heaven to which we can go with help, but there are plenty of them here. There are no jungles and regions of malaria where missionaries may prove their unreserved consecration by preaching the gospel at the expense of their lives. In some respects this world has a preference beyond the heavenly state as to the extent of doing the will of God. Oh, that we were better men, and then the saints above might almost envy us! If we did but live as we should live, we might make Gabriel stoop from his throne and cry, "I wish I were a man!" It is ours to lead the van in daily conflict with sin and Satan, and at the same time ours to bring up the rear, battling with the pursuing foe. God help us, since we are honoured with so rare a sphere, to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven.

"Ay," say you, "but heaven is the place of overflowing joy." Yes, and have you no joy even now? A saint who lives near to God is so truly blessed that he will not be much astonished when he enters heaven. He will be surprised to behold its glories more clearly; but he will have the same reason for delight as he possesses to-day. We live below the same life which we shall live above, for we are quickened by the same Spirit, are looking to the same Lord, and rejoicing in the same security. Joy! Do you not know it? Your Lord says, "That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." You will be larger vessels in heaven, but you will not be fuller; you will be brighter, doubtless, but you will not be cleaner than you are when the Lord has washed you and made you white in his own blood. Do not be impatient to go to heaven. Nay, do not have a wish about it. Set very loose by the things of earth; yet count it a great privilege to have a long life in which to serve the Lord on earth. Our mortal life is but a brief interval between the two eternities, and if we judged unselfishly, and saw the needs of earth, we might almost say, "Give us back the antediluvian periods of human life, that through a chiliad we might serve the Lord in suffering and in reproach, as we cannot do in glory." This life is the vestibule

of glory. Array yourselves in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for this is the court-dress of earth and heaven. Manifest at once the spirit of saints, or else you will never abide with them. Now begin the song which your lips shall carol in Paradise, or else you will never be admitted to the heavenly choirs; none can unite in the music but those who have rehearsed it here below.

IV. Lastly, THIS COMPARISON, which I feel I can so feebly bring out, of doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, OUGHT TO BE BORNE OUT BY HOLY DEEDS. Here is the urgency of the missionary enterprise. God's will can never be intelligently done where it is not known; therefore, in the first place, *it becomes us as followers of Jesus to see to it that the will of the Lord is made known* by heralds of peace sent forth from among us. Why has it not been already published in every land? We cannot blame the great Father, nor impute the fault to the Lord Jesus. The Spirit of the Lord is not straitened, nor the mercy of God restrained. Is it not probably true that the selfishness of Christians is the main reason for the slow progress of Christianity? If Christianity is never to spread in the world at a more speedy rate than the present, it will not even keep pace with the growth of the population. If we are going to give to Christ's kingdom no larger a percentage than we have usually given, I suppose it will require about an eternity-and-a-half to convert the world; or, in other words, it will never be done. The progress made is so slow, that it threatens to be like that of the crab, which is always described in the fable as going backward. What do we give, brethren? What do we do? A friend exhorts me to say that the Baptist Missionary Society ought to raise a million a-year. I have my doubts about *that;* but he proposes that we should, at least, try to do so for one year. There is nothing like having a high mark to aim at. A million a-year seems hugely too much by the general consent of you all, and yet I am not sure. What amount of property is now held by Baptists? The probable estimate of money now in the hands of baptized believers in the United Kingdom might make us ashamed that a million is not put down at once. Far more than that is spent by a similar number of Englishmen upon strong drink. We do not know how much wealth lies in the custody of God's stewards; and some of them are not likely to let us know until we read it in the paper, and then we shall discover that they died worth so many hundreds of thousands. The world counts men to be worth what they hoard; but in truth they were not worth much, or else they could not have retained so much from the work of the Lord when it was needed for the spread of the gospel. As a denomination we are improving a little. We are improving *a little.* I was obliged to repeat that sentence, and place the emphasis in the right place. We may not congratulate ourselves: considerable room for improvement yet remains: the income of the Society might be doubled and no one oppressed in the process. It is not for us to say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: but, Lord, thou hast many ways and means of accomplishing that will; I pray thee do it, but let me not be asked to help on the work." No, when I utter this prayer, if I am sincere I shall be searching my stores to see what I can give to make known the truth. I shall be enquiring whether I cannot personally speak the saving word.

I shall not decline to give because the times are very hard, neither shall I fail to speak because I am of a retiring disposition. An opportunity is a golden gift. Now, do not offer the prayer of the text if you do not mean it. Better omit the petition than play the hypocrite with it. You who fail to support missions when it is in your power to do so should never say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," but leave out that petition for fear of mocking God.

Our text, dear friends, leads me to say that as God's will must be known that it may be done, *it must be God's will that we should make it known;* because God is love, and the law under which he has placed us is that we love. What love of God dwelleth in that man who denies to a benighted heathen that light without which he will be lost? Love is a grand word to talk of, but it is nobler as a principle to be obeyed. Can there be love of God in that man's heart who will not help to send the gospel to those who are without it? We want to bless the world; we have a thousand schemes by which to bless it, but if ever God's will is done in earth as it is done in heaven it will be an unmixed and comprehensive blessing. Join the Peace Society by all means, and be forgiving and peaceable yourself; but there is no way of establishing peace on the earth except by God's will being done in it, and that can only be done through the renewing of men's hearts by the gospel of Jesus Christ. By all manner of means let us endeavour so to control politics, as Christian men, that oppression shall not remain in the earth; but, after all, there will be oppression unless the gospel is spread. This is the one balm for all earth's wounds. They will bleed still until the Christ shall come to bind them up. Oh, let us then, since this is the best thing that can be, show our love to God and man by spreading his saving truth.

The text says, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Suppose any one of you had come from heaven. It is but a supposition; but let it stand for a minute: suppose that a man here has come fresh from heaven. Some would be curious to see what his bodily form would be like. They would expect to be dazzled by the radiance of his countenance. However, we will let that pass. We want to see how he would live. Coming newly from heaven, how would he act? Oh, sirs, if he came here to do the same as all men do on earth, only after a heavenly sort, what a father he would be, what a husband, what a brother, what a friend! I would sit down and let him preach this morning, most assuredly; and when he had done preaching, I would go home with him, and have a chat. I should be careful to observe what he would do with his substance. His first thought would be, if he had a shilling, to lay it out for God's glory. "But," says one, "I have to go to shop with my shilling." Be it so, but when you go say, "Oh! Lord, help me to lay it out to thy glory." There should be as much piety in buying your necessaries as in going to a place of worship. I do not think this man coming fresh from heaven would say, "I must have this luxury; I must have this goodly raiment; I must have this grand house." But he would say, "How much can I save for the God of heaven? How much can I invest in the country I came from?" I am sure he would be pinching and screwing to save money to serve God with; and he himself, as he went about the streets, and mingled with ungodly men and women, would be sure to find out ways of getting at their con-

sciences and hearts; he would be always trying to bring others to the felicity he had enjoyed. Think that over, and live *so*—so as he did who really did come down from heaven. For after all, the best rule of life is, what would Jesus do if he were here to-day, and the world still lying in the wicked one? If Jesus were in your business, if he had your money, how would he spend it? For that is how *you* ought to spend it. Now think, my brother, you will be in heaven very soon. Since last year a great number have gone home: before next year many more will have ascended to glory. Sitting up in those celestial seats, how shall we wish that we had lived below? It will not give any man in heaven even a moment's joy to think that he gratified himself while here. It will give him no reflections suitable to the place to remember how much he amassed, how much he left behind to be quarrelled over after he was gone; he will say to himself, "I wish I had saved more of my capital by sending it on before me, for what I saved on earth was lost, but what I spent for God was really laid up where thieves do not break through and steal."

Oh, brothers, let us live as we shall wish we had lived when life is over; let us fashion a life which will bear the light eternal. Is it life to live otherwise? Is it not a sort of fainting fit, a coma, out of which life may not quite have gone, but all that is worth calling life has oozed away? Unless we are striving mightily to honour Jesus, and bring home his banished, we are dead while we live. Let us aim at a life which will outlast the fires which shall try every man's work.

If I may have moved any person here to resolve, "I will so live," I have not spoken in vain. I have at least stirred myself with the intense desire to cast off the mere outsides and husks of life, and to ripen the real kernel of my being. Thy will by me be done on earth, as yet, my Lord, I hope to do it in the skies. May I begin here a life worthy to be perpetuated in eternity. God bless you, for Christ's sake. **Amen.**

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Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

ONE LOST SHEEP.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 28TH, 1889, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray."—Matthew xviii. 12, 13.

THIS passage occurs in a discourse of our Saviour against *despising one of those little ones that believe in him.* He foretells a dreadful doom for those who, in their contempt for the little ones, cause them to stumble; and he forbids that contempt by a variety of forcible arguments, upon which we cannot now dwell. There is a tendency, apparent at this present time, to think little of the conversion of individuals, and to look upon the work of the Holy Spirit upon each separate person as much too slow a business for this progressive age. We hear grand theories of a theocracy of a kind unknown to Holy Scripture: a semi-political dominion of the Lord over masses wherein the individuals are unregenerate. We listen to great swelling words about the uplifting of nations and the advancement of the race; but these lofty ideas do not produce facts, nor have they any moral power. Our "cultured" teachers, weary of the humdrum work of bringing individual souls into light; they pine to do it wholesale, by a far more rapid process than that of personal salvation. They are tired of the units, their great minds dwell upon "the solidarity of the race." I am bold to assert that if ever we despise the method of individual conversion, we shall get into an unsound order of business altogether, and find ourselves wrecked upon the rocks of hypocrisy. Even in those right glorious times when the gospel shall have the freest course, and shall run the most quickly, and be the most extensively glorified, its progress will still be after the former manner of the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of individuals, who shall each one believe and be baptized, according to the Word of the Lord.

I fear lest in any of you there should be even the least measure of despising the one lost sheep, because of the large and philosophical methods which are now so loudly cried up. I would not have you exchange the gold of individual Christianity for the base metal of

Christian Socialism. If the wanderers are to be brought in in vast numbers, as I pray they may be, yet must it be accomplished by the bringing of them in one by one. To attempt national regeneration without personal regeneration is to dream of erecting a house without separate bricks. In the vain attempt to work in the gross, we may miss the practical result which would have followed working in detail. Let us settle it in our minds that we cannot do better than obey the example of our Lord Jesus, given us in the text, and go after the one sheep which has gone astray.

Our text warns us that *we are not to despise one person, even on account of evil character*. The first temptation is to despise *one*, because only one; the next is to despise one, because that one is so little; the next, and perhaps the most dangerous, form of the temptation, is to despise one, because that one has gone astray. The individual is not in the right path, not obeying law, nor reflecting credit on the church, but doing much that vexes the spiritual, and grieves the holy; yet we are not, therefore, to despise him. Read the eleventh verse: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." In the Greek, the word "lost" is a very strong word: we may read it, "that which is destroyed." It does not mean "that which is non-existent," as you will clearly see; but that which is destroyed as to usefulness to the shepherd, as to happiness to itself, and as to working out the intent for which it was created. If any are so effectually destroyed by sin that their existence is a greater calamity than their non-existence would have been; if they are now dead in trespasses and sins, and even offensive in character, yet must we not despise them. The Son of man did not despise such, since "He has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Many a soul that has been so destroyed as to be lost to itself, lost to God, lost to his people, lost to anything like hope and holiness, the Lord Jesus Christ has saved by his gracious power. *He values each one;* this is the lesson which I would teach this morning to the utmost of my power. May the Holy Spirit teach it also.

In considering the words of our Lord which are now before us, I beg you to notice, first, that *the Lord Jesus herein shows peculiar interest in one lost soul;* secondly, *he puts forth special exertion for the rescue of this lost one;* and thirdly, *he displays a special rejoicing when the lost one is restored*. When we have thought of all this, we shall then observe, fourthly, that *he sets us a very striking example*, herein teaching us to care for each soul destroyed by sin.

I. First, then, in the words before us, OUR SAVIOUR SHOWS PECULIAR INTEREST IN ONE LOST SOUL.

Note, in the commencement, that for the sake of those lost ones *our Lord assumes a special character*. The eleventh verse puts it, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." He was not originally known as "the Son of man," but as "the Son of God." Before all worlds, he dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." But in order to redeem men, the Son of the Highest became "the Son of man." He was born of the Virgin, and by birth inherited the innocent infirmities of our nature, and bore the sufferings incident to those infirmities. Then did he also take upon

himself our sin and its penalty, and therefore died upon the cross. He was in all points made like unto his brethren. He could not be the shepherd of men without becoming like to them, and therefore the Word condescended to be made flesh. Behold the stupendous miracle of incarnation! Nothing can excel this marvel—Immanuel, God with us! "Being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." O lost one, conscious of your loss, take heart to-day when the name of Jesus is named in your hearing; he is God, but he is man, and as God-and-man he saves his people from their sins.

Next to this, to show how Jesus values one lost soul, he *makes a very wonderful descent.* "The Son of man is come." He was always known as "The Coming One"; but as to the salvation of the lost he has actually come. For judgment he is "the coming one" still; but for salvation we rejoice that our Saviour has already come. Quitting the assemblies of the perfect, he has been here as the Friend of publicans and sinners. From being the Lord of angels, he has stooped to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Yes, he has come; and not in vain. Those who preached the coming Saviour had such a joyous message to deliver that their feet were beautiful upon the mountains, and their voices were as heavenly music; but as for us who preach that he has come, and, coming, has finished the work which he undertook to perform—surely ours is the choicest of messages. Our Lord Jesus has completed the atoning sacrifice, and the justifying righteousness, by which lost men are saved: happy is the preacher of such tidings, and blessed are your ears that hear them! The good Shepherd has performed all that is necessary for the salvation of the flock which his Father has given into his hands. Beloved, let us take heart. Lost as we are, Christ has come to save us. He has come to the place of our ruin and woe. His coming and seeking will not be in vain. Brethren, how greatly ought we to value the souls of men when Jesus for their sake becomes a man, and comes into this sinful world among our guilty race that he may work the salvation of the lost!

Note, here, that *he does this for those that are still straying.* I have marked, in looking at the Greek text, that it is written, "He seeketh that which goeth astray." The Shepherd seeks while the sheep strays: seeks it because it strays and needs seeking. Full many of the Lord's redeemed are even now going astray, and even now is the Shepherd going after them. The Saviour seeks those who are even now sinning. That he should have a love to those who are repenting I can well understand; but that he should care for those who are wilfully going astray is far more gracious. Jesus seeks those whose backs are towards him, who are going further and further away from the fold; herein is grace most free, most full, most sovereign. Indeed it is so. Though thou dost harden thyself against the Lord, though thou dost refuse to turn at his rebuke, yet if thou be his redeemed, his eye of love marks thee; in all thy wilful wanderings he follows thee. He sees thee, he seeks thee; oh that thou mayest yield, and find that he saves thee! O ye that are now in the flock, think of the love of Christ to you when you were outside the fold; when you had no wish

to return; when, seeing him pursuing you, you only ran the faster to escape his almighty love! Let us sing together,

"Determined to save, he watched o'er my path,
When, Satan's blind slave, I sported with death."

Notwithstanding all my rebellion, and all my wilful transgression, he still loved me with his heart, and pursued me with his Word. Oh, how we ought to love sinners, since Jesus loved us, and died for us while we were yet sinners! We must care for drunkards while they still pass round the cup; swearers even while we hear them swear; and profligates while we mourn to see them polluting our midnight streets. We must not wait till we see some better thing in them, but feel an intense interest for them as what they are—straying and lost. When the sheep is torn with the thorns of the waste places, and is sick, and worn to skin and bones with long wanderings and hungerings, we must seek its restoration, though we see in it no desire to submit itself to the Shepherd's care and rule. Such was our Saviour's love to us: such be our love to lost ones.

The Shepherd takes a peculiar interest in the lost, not only as now straying, but as *having already gone very far away*. Carefully consider these words—"If so be that he find it." That "if" tells its own tale. The sheep had become so terribly lost that it was not likely to be found again: it had wandered into so dense a thicket, or strayed into so wild a region, that it seemed scarcely within the bounds of hope that it would ever be discovered and brought back. We do not often meet with an "if" in reference to the work of Christ; but here is one—"If so be that he find it." This does not show weakness in the Shepherd, but the desperate danger of the sheep. I have often heard it said, by those who come to confess Christ, and to acknowledge his love to them, that they are struck with wonder that they, above all others, should be doing any such thing. When we sit at the Lord's table, the feast is very wonderful; but the greatest wonder is the guest, when I am there. How humbly do we each one sing,

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter where there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"

But it is so. The good Shepherd is to-day seeking many whose salvation seems highly improbable, if not utterly impossible. Herein is love that he should go after those whose finding is by no means a certainty, nor even a probability! Very improbable, almost impossible, is the task he undertakes! Yet in such he takes a deep interest.

Moreover, those toward whom our Lord has these thoughts of love have often sinned so as to have *brought themselves into the deadliest danger*. "For the Son of man is come *to save* that which was lost." Saving implies ruin, peril, jeopardy—yea, destruction already in a measure present. Are not many now playing with the fire of hell? For what is that unquenchable fire but sin, in its nature and results? Men are trifling on the brink of eternal woe: "Their foot shall slide in due time." Playing with edged tools is nothing in danger compared with sporting with your lusts; and many are doing so. Yet,

despite their danger, Jesus seeks them. See you not those sheep heedlessly feeding near the den of the wolf? In a little the monster will devour them. They are far away from home, and food, and rest, and safety. They have no desire to return; but they are resolved to roam yet further from the fold. The Lord Jesus comes after such desperately deluded ones. Until you pass the iron gate the gospel will invite you to return. If you be but one inch this side of hell, love will pursue you, and mercy will follow you. Our glorious David, while a lamb still lives, is able to rescue it from the jaw of the lion, and the paw of the bear. Though, like Jonah, a soul may have descended into the deeps, and may lie out of all human reach, yet a word from Jesus can bring it up from the lowest pit. Glory be to the blessed name of the Almighty Saviour, he is able to save to the uttermost: his power to save the lost is such that none are too vile for his salvation.

If we rightly consider the parable before us, we shall see that *he takes a special interest in these stray sheep because they are his own.* This man did not go after wild beasts, nor after other men's sheep; but he had a hundred sheep of his own, and when he had counted them, he missed one. The hireling, whose own the sheep are not, would have said, "We have nearly the hundred: we need not be particular about an odd one." But these hundred sheep belonged to the Shepherd himself; they were his own by choice, by inheritance, by divine gift, by glorious capture, and by costly purchase, and he could not accept ninety and nine for a hundred. "None of them is lost," saith he. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Jesus could not endure to report a loss upon the flock handed over to him of the Father. Ninety-nine is not a hundred, and the Saviour will not consider it such; for well he knows that "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Dear friends, since Jesus takes such an interest even in one stray soul, you must not think it little that you should be called to care for a single soul. Do not think that a little congregation of forty or fifty is too few to be worthy of your best efforts. Should your class, through various circumstances, get down to a very small number, do not, therefore, give it up. No, no. Value one soul more than a world's purchase. The full company of the redeemed is far from being made up as yet, and the Lord hath much people in this city not yet brought to his feet; therefore, never dream of ceasing your labours. Rest not till the hour shall come,

> "When all the chosen race
> Shall meet around the throne;
> Shall bless the conduct of his grace,
> And make his glories known."

II. Secondly, may the Spirit of God help me while I remind you that OUR LORD PUT FORTH SPECIAL EXERTION TO SAVE ONE SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL.

Observe in the parable—for it is a parable, though briefly told—that we see the Shepherd *leaving happier cares.* He felt himself at home

with his attached and faithful flock; they had not gone astray, and they gathered about him, and he fed them, and took pleasure in them. There is always a great deal to do with sheep: they have many diseases, many weaknesses, many needs; but when you have an attached, affectionate flock about you, you feel at home with them. So the great Shepherd describes himself as leaving the ninety and nine, his choice flock, the sheep that had fellowship with him, and he with them. Yes, he leaves those in whom he could take pleasure, to seek one that gave him pain. I will not dwell upon how he left the paradise above, and all the joy of his Father's house, and came to this bleak world; but I pray you remember that he did so. It was a wonderful descent when he came from beyond the stars to dwell on this beclouded globe, to redeem the sons of men. But, remember, he still continually comes by his Spirit. His errands of mercy are perpetual. The Spirit of God moves his ministers, who are Christ's representatives, to forego the feeding of the gathered flock, and to seek, in their discourses, the salvation of the wandering ones, in whose character and behaviour there is nothing to cheer us. My Master's heart is full of care for all that love him; he wears their names engraven on the jewels of his breast-plate; but yet his heart is always going forth afar, after those who have not yet been brought to him; and after those who once were in his fold, but have gone aside, and quitted the flock. He leaves the happy and the holy, and gives his best thoughts to the lost.

Our Lord *goes out to seek these.* It is not merely a sending forth of thought, it is a marching forth of power. His divine grace is going forth, I trust, this day, beyond the company whom he has called by his grace, to those other sheep, who are not yet of his fold, whom also he must bring in. He would not have his church expend all her care on the flock which he has led into her green pastures, but he would have her go afield after those who are not yet in her blest society.

According to the text, the Shepherd goes into the mountains: among difficulties and dangers. He will do and dare for the saving of the lost: no hardships can daunt his mighty love. You know through what dark ravines he passed in saving men. You have heard what climbing he had after proud souls, and what condescensions for despairing ones. A sheep in the East is more light of foot than our sheep; it will leap like a gazelle, and climb the mountains like a chamois; and so are sinners very swift in transgression, and very daring in presumption. They leap in their iniquities where the children of God would shudder to follow them even in thought. They make nothing of leaps of profanity which would curdle the blood of him that has been taught the fear of God at the feet of Jesus Christ. Yet the Lord Jesus went after these desperadoes. What difficulties he conquered, what sufferings he endured, what mountains he overleaped, that he might seek and save! O brethren, the same heart is in him still: he goes forth continually in the preaching of the Word. With many a sigh and many a groan on the part of his chosen ministers, he goes among the mountains to seek that which has gone astray. I pray that he may accept the effort of his unworthy servant this day, and bring some lost one home by means of this sermon.

To show his exertion for the lost, our Lord describes himself as *seeking with persevering diligence*. He looks this way, but sees nothing. He shades his eyes with his hand, and looks steadily! He thought he saw his sheep. There is surely a living object upon the hill-side! He gazes intently. No, it does not stir: it is a white rock! Possibly the lost sheep is in yonder gully! It is a long way to go, but he is so intent on his purpose that he is soon there; but the sheep is not to be seen. Where can it be? He travels on with swift foot, for he does not know what may become of his sheep while he delays. Every now and then he stops: he thinks he hears a bleating. Surely it is the voice of his sheep! He is mistaken. His love makes his ear the father of sounds which are not sounds at all. He has neither seen nor heard it these long hours; but he will continue seeking till he finds it. The concentrated omniscience of Christ is set upon a soul that goes astray, looking after it in all its evil desires and evil emotions; watching the growth of anything that looks like repentance; and observing with sorrow the hardening of its heart. This is what our Lord is doing for those redeemed with blood, who as yet have not been carried back to the fold. He puts forth a gracious exertion of eye and mind as well as of foot and hand, towards his wandering sheep.

At the last he saves—completely saves. He has not come to make the salvation of his people possible; but to save them. He has not come to put them in the way of saving themselves, but to save them. He has not come to half save them; but to save them altogether. When my Lord comes forth in the majesty of his sovereign grace to save a soul, he achieves his purpose, despite sin, and death, and hell. The wolf may grind his teeth, but the Shepherd is the wolf's master. The sheep itself may for a long time have wandered, and at the last may struggle against him; but he grips its feet, and throws the creature on his shoulders, and bears it home; for he is resolved to save it. The sheep is glad to be so borne, for with a touch the Shepherd moulds its will to his more perfect will. His grace is the triumphant energy by which the lost one is restored.

The salvation of a single soul is a mass of miracles. I have heard of a fire which consumed the shop of a jeweller, and a number of costly treasures of gold, and silver, and precious stones, were found among the ruins, caked into a conglomerate of riches. What a salvage! Such is the salvation of a single man, it is a mass of priceless mercies melted into one inestimable ingot, dedicated to the praise of the glory of his grace who makes us to be "accepted in the Beloved," and "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." When I think of the energy which is put forth by the Lord to save a single lost soul, I feel stirred in my heart, and I desire that your hearts should be stirred also, that we may put forth all our strength to go and find the Lord's lost ones. Let us co-operate with him in his great labour of seeking that which is lost. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may put such a spirit within us, and keep it there!

III. I am compelled to pass onward somewhat hurriedly. Notice, in the third place, that our Lord FEELS A SPECIAL REJOICING AT THE RECOVERY OF A WANDERING SHEEP. Do not make a mistake here. Do

not suppose that our Lord loves more the one soul that has wandered than the ninety and nine who have been preserved by his grace from going astray. Oh, no! he thinks ninety-nine times more of ninety-nine than of one; for his sheep are each one equally precious to him. We must not suppose that he looks upon any one soul of his redeemed with a tenderness ninety-nine times greater than he gives to another. But you will see the meaning of the passage by an illustration from your own experience. You have a family, and you love all your children alike. But little Johnny is very ill; he has a fever, and is like to die: now you think more of him than of all the rest. He recovers, and you bring him downstairs in your arms, and just then he is the dearest child of the whole company. Not that he is really more valued than his brothers and sisters, but the fact that he has been so ill, and was likely to die, has brought him more before your mind, and caused you more anxiety, and therefore you have more joy in him because of his recovery. The great deeps of Christ's love are the same to all his flock, but on the surface there is sometimes a holy storm of joy when any one of them has been newly restored after wandering.

Learn the occasion of this demonstrative joy. The wandering one has caused great sorrow. We were all grieved that our brother should become a gross backslider, that such an earnest Christian as he seemed to be should disgrace his profession. Our Lord is still more grieved than we are. When the erring one comes back, we feel a new joy in him. In proportion to the sorrow felt over the wanderer, is the joy manifested when he is restored.

Moreover, great apprehensions were aroused; we feared that he was not the Lord's, and that he would go back unto perdition. We trembled for him. That black dread is all over now: the sheep is safe, the doubtful one is saved and restored to the fold. In proportion to the weight of the apprehension is the intensity of the relief.

The Shepherd had exercised also great labour over the lost one. He went up among the mountains to find his sheep; but now his labour is fully rewarded, for he has found his lost sheep. He remembereth no more his travel and travail for joy that the sheep is safe.

Besides, in this newly-restored one, *there are marks of salvation which cause joy*. He has been torn with the briars, but he is resting now. See how he lies down in the tender grass! He was weary and worn, and almost dead with his wanderings; but now, how happy he is in the presence of his shepherd! How closely he keeps to his shepherd's footsteps! All this goes to make the shepherd glad!

Besides, the shepherd rejoices when he brings back the lost sheep because *he makes that rescue an occasion and opportunity for having a special gala day*. He wishes all his sheep to learn his delight in them all by seeing his delight in one. I know it is so in the church. I bless the Lord when he keeps the feet of his saints: I bless him every day for preserving grace; but when some grievous wanderer is restored, then we bless him more emphatically. Then we have music and dancing. The elder brother wonders what these overflowing joys can mean: but everybody else can see good reason for special mirth when the lost one is found. Shepherds and their flocks cannot have holiday

every day; but when a lost one has been recovered, they feel such mutual delight in each other, and such a common delight in the saving of the lost, that they seize upon the occasion for rejoicing. I want you all to recognize that, if you love the church of Christ, you are bound to keep a feast-day when fallen ones are raised up; and that you may hold that festival, you are bound to put out all your strength to bring in the lost one.

IV. Now we come to the tug-of-war, that is, to look upon our divine Shepherd as HE SETS US A STRIKING EXAMPLE.

We may view this text as *our personal missionary warrant.* To-day we are called upon to think of missions; and as I think it idle to preach about missions in the big high-flying style, I have purposed to say something common-place, but practical. Brethren, we are all of us to be missionaries for Christ, and the text presents a warrant for each one to work earnestly as a soul-winner.

What shall we do, then, to imitate our Lord? The answer is—Let us *go after one* soul. I cannot make a selection for you this morning, but I do entreat all who are workers together with God to go after the ones. There is a kind of knack in speaking to individuals —everybody does not possess it; but every believer should labour to acquire it. Seek the souls of men one by one. It is far easier work to me to speak to you all than it would be to take each one apart and speak to him personally of his soul; and yet such speaking to you one by one might be more successful than this sermon to you in the mass. I entreat you, as the great Shepherd goes after one, do not think you will demean yourself by going after one poor man, or woman, or child; but do it now.

Listen again: *let that one be somebody that is quite out of the way.* Try and think of one who has grievously gone astray; it may be there is one such in your family, or you meet with one such in the course of trade. Think carefully of that one soul, and reflect upon its sin and danger. You would like to pick out a hopeful case, in order that you might feel sure of success. Take another course this time: seek the one which is going astray, and seems hopeless. Follow your Lord's example, and go after one who is the least likely to be found. Will you try this plan? If you do not, you will be quitting the way of your Lord.

"I have a class and a work," says one. Yes, I want you, for a little, to *leave the ninety and nine.* I pray that you may feel called to look after some one greatly depraved person, or some utterly neglected child. Keep up your ninety-and-nine class, if you possibly can, but, at all hazards, go after the one. Make an unusual effort; go out of your way; let ordinary service be placed second for the time being. It will be a healthy change for you, and, perhaps, a great relief. Peradventure, you will come back and do more good with the ninety and nine, after you have been away a little while with the straying one. You are getting a little mouldy; and you are just a wee tired of the monotony of your work. Every Sunday the same girls, or the same boys, and the same form of lesson. Well, cut the whole concern for a little, and go after the one sheep that has gone astray. "You are giving us odd advice, Mr. Spurgeon." If it is not in my

text, then do not follow it; but if it is in our dear Master's words, I trust you will carry it out bravely.

When you go after that one, *have all your wits about you.* Go and *seek;* and that you cannot do, unless you are on the alert. Follow up the straying one. Did you say that you would wait till he called at your house? Is that your notion of seeking lost sheep? Is that the way of sportsmen in the autumn? do they sit in the drawing-room till the pheasants fly by the window? That would be poor sport.

> "O come, let us go and find them,
> In the paths of death they roam."

Go after them, for so the shepherd did. He braved the mountain's slippery side. I do not suppose the shepherd had any greater love for mountain tracks than you have; but up the rough tracks he climbed, for the sheep's sake. Go after sinners into their poverty and wretchedness, until you find them.

Here is one thing to cheer you. If you should win such a soul as that, *you will have more joy, a great deal, than in saving those for whom you regularly labour*—more joy over that lost one than over the ninety and nine hopeful ones. It will be such a support to your faith, such a fillip for your joy, such a bright light to your labour, to have won such a specially guilty one. I should not wonder but what you will talk about it for many a day, and it will be a source of strength to you when things are not quite as you would desire. Such converts are our crown of rejoicing. May I specially recommend that you make a trial of this extra sheep-seeking? If you do not succeed, you will have done no harm; for you will have copied your Lord and Master. But you will succeed, for he is with you, and his Spirit works by you.

I would remind you that, *even under the old law, you would be bound to do this thing.* Turn to the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, and read the fourth and fifth verses. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." You are bound to do good even to your enemy. Will you not serve your best friend? If your enemy's ox or ass needed to be taken back to him, you are bound to do it. How much more when the sheep belongs to him whom you love with all your heart! Prove your love to Jesus by labouring to take him back his strays!

Turn to the twenty-second of Deuteronomy, first to fourth verses, and there you will find another bit of the law. "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother." Oh, will you not bring in the stray sheep of your greater Brother, "the first-born among many brethren"? "And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again." If you cannot get a soul to Christ, at any rate get it to yourself. If you cannot lead it immediately to conversion, show it some hospitality within your own doors, by ministering such comfort as you can. Do what you can to cheer the poor heart

till Christ comes after it. "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again." How easy it is to *hide ourselves!* that is the expression used by Moses, "thou shalt not hide thyself from them." When you know that people are very wicked, the usual plan is to wish them well, but keep out of their way. Prudence makes you hide yourself from them. The whole street may swarm with harlots, but then you have gone to bed, and the door is shut. What has their sin to do with you? There are many drunken men about; but you do not drink to excess, what has their drinking to do with you? That is what is meant by hiding ourselves from them. How easily that can be done! Take an illustration which is worth the telling. A vessel, the other day, was crossing the Atlantic, and it fell in with that disabled emigrant ship, *The Danmark*. Suppose the captain had kept on his course. He might have looked another way, and resolved not to be detained. He might have argued, "I am bound to do the best for my owners. It will hinder me greatly if I go pottering about after this vessel. I had better go by, and not see it; or make haste to port and send out help." It could have been done, and nobody would have been the wiser; for the ship would have gone down soon. The captain of that vessel was a man of a nobler breed. He did not hide himself, nor turn the blind eye towards the vessel in distress. But what did the captain do? All honour to him, he came near, and took the ship in tow. This was not all: he found that she could not keep afloat, and he resolved to take those hundreds of emigrants on board his own ship. But he could not carry them and his cargo too. What then? The decision was greatly to his honour. Overboard goes the cargo! God's blessing rest on the man! Into the sea went the freight, and the passengers were taken on board, and carried to the nearest port. He could have easily hidden himself, could he not? So can you, you Christian people, as you call yourselves. Can you go through this world and always have a blind eye to the case of lost sinners? Can you come in and out of this Tabernacle and never speak to the strangers who throng these aisles? Will you let them go to hell unwarned and uninstructed? Can you hide yourselves from them! How dare you call yourselves Christians? How will you answer for it at last? Brothers, sisters, let us shake off this inhuman indifference, and, deny ourselves rest, ease, credit, that we may save poor sinking souls. Overboard with cargo cheerfully, that you may, in the power of the Holy Ghost, save souls from death.

Once more, this text is *the great missionary warrant for all the church of God*. We are to go, as the Saviour did, to seek and to save that which was lost; and we are to do this, not on account of the numbers of the heathen, but for one of them. I grant you there is a great power in the argument of numbers—so many hundreds of millions in China, so many hundreds of millions in India; but if there were only one person left unsaved in any part of the world, it would be worth while for the entire Christian church to go after that one person; for he who is greater than the church, as the Bridegroom is greater than the bride, quitted heaven, ay, and quitted the sweet society of his own beloved, that he might go after the one that had gone astray. Do not

care, therefore, about numbers: save the smallest tribes. Have an eye to the hamlets in England. I believe that the scattered cottages of our land are in a worse condition than the villages. Care for the ones. Your Lord did so, and here is your warrant for doing the like.

Next, notice, that we ought never to be moved by the supposed superiority of a race. I have heard it said that it would be far better to try and convert the superior races than to consider the more degraded. Is it not better to bring in the educated Brahmins than the wild hill-tribes? "What a fine sort of people these are, these philosophical Hindoos! If we could win them they would be worth converting!" That is not at all according to the mind of Christ. The Shepherd sought a lost sheep, and when he had found it, it was no great spoil for him, for it was so worn out as to be nothing but a destroyed sheep. Yet he went after that one poor animal. Let us feel that the degraded Africans, the dwarfs of the woods, the cannibals of New Guinea, and all such, are to be sought quite as much as more advanced races. They are men; that is enough.

Once more, the motive for missionary enterprise must never be the excellence of the character of the individuals. The shepherd did not go after the sheep, because it never went astray, nor because it was docile, but because it did go astray, and was not docile. The sin of men is their claim upon the church of God. The more sin, the more reason for abounding grace. Oh that the church would feel it to be her duty, if not to go to the most degraded first, yet not to leave them to the last! Where you seem least likely to succeed there go at once, for there you will find room for faith; and where there is room for faith, and faith fills the room, God will send a blessing.

Dear friends, as you cannot, all of you, go abroad to the heathen, though some of you ought to do so, I ask you to do what you can do. Contribute to the collection, which is for the support of mission work. Here is a small opportunity; and if you do not avail yourselves of it, you are not likely to do the greater thing to which I have invited you. The Lord bless you! Amen.

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HEARKEN AND LOOK; OR, ENCOURAGEMENT FOR BELIEVERS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27TH, 1881, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT EXETER HALL.

(*The Annual Sermon on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society.*)

"Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."—Isaiah li. 2, 3.

THE second verse contains my actual text. It is the argument by which faith is led to look for the blessings promised in the third verse.

It is habitual with some persons to spy out the dark side of every question or fact: they fix their eyes upon the "waste places," and they study them till they know every ruin, and are familiar with the dragons and the owls. They sigh most dolorously that the former times were better than these, and that we have fallen upon most degenerate days. They speak of "shooting Niagara," and of all sorts of frightful things. I am afraid that a measure of this tendency to write bitter things dwells in almost all of us at this present season, for certain discouraging facts which cannot be ignored are pressing heavily upon men's spirits. The habit of looking continually towards the wildernesses is injurious because it greatly discourages; and anything that discourages an earnest worker is a serious leakage for his strength. Perhaps a worse result than honest discouragement comes of depressing views, for they often afford an apology for indifference and inaction. The smallest peg suffices to hang an excuse upon when we are anxious to escape from the stern service of faith. "I pray thee have me excused," is a request which was supported in the parable by the flimsiest of pretences, and discouragement makes one of the same sort. The sluggard's argument is on this wise,—"I will not attempt the work, for it is far too heavy for my poor strength. I fear the times are ill adapted to any special effort; indeed, I am not quite certain that success will ever attend the general work." It is therefore a dreadful thing when the Christian church begins to be discouraged, and means must be used to stay the evil

Such means we would use this day. Lo, we lift the standard of the divine promise. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," sounds out like a silver trumpet in the front of the host. Be encouraged, O ye of the faint heart; there are no more difficulties now than there were of old. The cause is no more in jeopardy than it was a thousand years ago. The result, the end, the consummation of all things is absolutely certain: it is in his hand who cannot fail, therefore be of good courage, and in waiting upon the Lord renew your strength.

Remember, ye that are cast down, that there are other voices besides those of the bittern and owl from the "waste places." My text has near to it twice, nay, three times, "HEARKEN TO ME." You have listened long enough to dreary suggestions from within, to gloomy prophecies from desponding friends, to the taunts of foes, and to the horrible whisperings of Satan: now hearken to him who promises to make the wilderness like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord.

O ye whose eyes are quick to discover evil, there are other sights in the world besides waste places and deserts, and hence my text hath near to it twice over the exhortation, "LOOK"—"Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn"; "Look unto Abraham your father." Why should your eyes for ever ache over desolations? Probably you have seen as much in the wilderness as you are ever likely to see there. It does not take long to discover all the treasures and comforts of the burning sand; you have probably discovered them all by now. As for the discomforts and wants of the desert, you are perhaps as well acquainted with them as you need to be. Gaze no longer at the thirsty land and the burning sky; turn your eye where the finger of the Lord points by his word. If we enquire what it is that the Lord would have us observe, he answers, "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you"; for there we may find comfort. O for the presence of the Holy Spirit, that the word may be full of the dew of heaven to refresh our souls.

I. We shall first look towards Abraham that we may see in him THE ORIGINAL OF GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE, the foundation stone, as it were, of the dispensation by which God blessed the former ages. In Judah was God known, his name was great in Israel: let us look to the rock whence Israel and Judah were hewn.

We observe, first, that the founder of God's first people was *called out of a heathen family*. "Your fathers," says Joshua, "dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and they served other gods." Abraham, the founder of the great system in which God was pleased to reveal himself for so long a time, and to whose seed the oracles of God were committed, was a dweller in Ur of the Chaldees, the city of the moon-god. We cannot tell to what extent he was actually engrossed in the superstition of his fathers, but it is certain that the family was years afterwards tainted with idolatry; for in Jacob's day the teraph was still venerated, and Rachel stole her father's images. Abraham, therefore, was called out from the place of his birth, and from the household to which he belonged, that in a separated condition, as a worshipper of the one God, he might keep the truth alive in the world. Recollect, then, that the first man from whom sprang that wondrous nation which God hath not even yet cast away was

originally himself an idolater, and had to be called out of his sinful state by effectual grace. Why, then, might not the Lord, if the cause of truth were this day reduced to its utmost extremity, again raise up a church out of one man? If an almost universal apostasy should hide the divine light, could he not kindle a torch among the heathen, and by its light illuminate the earth again? He could call out another Abraham, and bless him and increase him, and achieve the whole of his eternal purposes if all of us should sleep in the dust, and the visibly organized church of to-day should pass away as the snow of winter at the advent of spring. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is he not able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham? As to anything like discouragement, it ought to vanish at the thought that not only out of your Sunday-schools, your colleges, and your pulpits can God raise up leaders for his church, but he can find them in the very centre of heathenism. Where Satan's seat is, even there can the Lord raise up advocates for his cause. The thick darkness of superstition shall not prevent the chosen one from seeing the light, neither shall the bondage of sin hold back the captive from finding freedom and proclaiming it to others.

"Ah," you say, "but men are not called now, as Abraham was, by miraculous calls from heaven." I reply,—The statement may be true; but God's visible means of calling men are now so many that there can seldom be need of miracle. The Lord can by his Spirit make one of the millions of Bibles scattered over the world to be as powerful a means of call as though he had sent an angel from heaven; yea, a solitary leaf of a printed tract, if wafted by the wind, or carried by the wave, may be borne where God shall bless it to the calling forth of a champion ordained of old to do great exploits. Where ordinary means are so plentiful wisdom resorts not to signs and wonders. Miracles were of admirable use while they were necessary; but now that they are no longer required the prudence of God forbids an extravagant display of the supernatural. Now that the word of God is scattered "thick as leaves in Valambrosa" everywhere by willing and ready hands, what need can there be of voices of the day or visions of the night? The same Spirit who called Abraham by a supernatural voice can call others by the word of truth. Instead of regarding it as a prodigy that a man should be unexpectedly called out from among the heathen I look for it, and shall not be surprised to hear that in the remoter provinces of China, or in the centre of Thibet, or in the recesses of Africa men have been raised up to found churches for our Lord Jesus. God can through the printed page or by hints and rumours passed from hand to hand convey enough instruction to call out more Abrahams and bless them, and increase his kingdom by them. "Omnipotence hath servants everywhere." Let us never dream that the God of Abraham is short of means for calling out chosen men to build up his church. Surely Christian people should never doubt the power of God to raise up lights in dark places when we remember that the greatest preacher of the gospel, namely, the apostle Paul, was drafted into the army of Christ from the ranks of his direst foes. The proud Pharisee, a fanatic of the fanatics, embittered against Christ, and persecuting his people, became the earnest advocate of Christ Jesus. Aforetime

his breath was threatening and slaughter, yet on the road to Damascus he was conquered and transformed. As a lion roareth over his prey, so did Paul rejoice that the saints in Damascus were now in his power; but the Lord struck him down, and turned the lion to a lamb, and henceforth where sin abounded grace did much more abound. First in the ranks of Christian heroes stands the man who called himself the chief of sinners because he persecuted the church of God. My brethren, as Luther came from among the monks, so out of Rome, yea, from the Vatican itself, can God, if he wills, call another Luther. The darkness of the times cannot forbid it, for God is light. The weakness of the church cannot hinder it, for all power belongeth unto God. There may not be among us to-day one whom God will so greatly honour as to make him a spiritual father of nations; but there may be such a one in the courts of Whitechapel or in the rookeries of St. Giles. The Christ, who was himself called the Galilean, despises no place or people. Our king is not particular as to the mine from which he digs his gold. The great seeker of precious souls full often finds his purest pearls in the deepest and the blackest waters. Take this, then, for encouragement, ye who tremble for the ark of God: he can build up a spiritual house for himself out of dark quarries, and find cedars for his temple in forests untraversed by the feet of missionaries.

"Ah," say you, "but Abraham was naturally a man of noble mould. Where do you find such a princely spirit as his?" I answer, Who made him? He that made him can make another like him. There is a grace of God which goes before what we are accustomed to call saving grace: I mean a grace of God which, in the creating of the nature, makes it a fit instrument for the grace which is after to be bestowed. By such sovereign favour one man is from his birth endowed with a superior mind and character, being adorned, even as a natural man, with much that is excellent in its own order. How often do you see among certain men of the world a generosity, honesty, open-heartedness, and nobility of disposition which are not grace, but which mark men out as fit to be leaders in all that is good when grace calls them into the divine service? The Lord can just as soon make a man after the type of Abraham as after any other type; and doubtless he has such in store even now, to whom his call will yet come. We may expect to see men of strong convictions converted into believers who "stagger not at the promise through unbelief." From among priests and pagans we may hope that the Lord will raise up pillars for his church. Is not this hope encouraged in your breasts as you "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you"?

Look again and observe that *Abraham was but one man.* Do not be startled at the sound which seems to have such terrors for certain brethren. I have heard the cant of those who object to a "one-man ministry," a ministry to which all the while they usually submit in their own meetings; but to my ear there is music, and not terror, in the term "a one-man ministry." I bless God that all my hope of salvation hangs upon the divine ministry of the One Man. Is not Christ, as the servant of God, the very pattern of all ministries which are of God? Working out the Father's eternal purpose by a life which was necessarily unique in many points, he trod the wine-press alone; in this, however,

he causes many of his people to have fellowship with him, even as in the case of Paul, who says, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." I am bold also to say that the Lord has as a rule wrought more nobly by one man than by bands and corporations of men. He in whose seed all nations are blessed was but one. "I called him," saith he, "alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Nor is this a solitary instance. When the earth was utterly corrupt God conserved the race by a solitary preacher of righteousness, who prepared an ark for the saving of his house. See how one Joseph saved whole nations from famine, and one Moses brought out a race from bondage. Who was there to keep Israel right when Moses fell on sleep but the one man Joshua? What were the prosperous times in the era of the Judges but days when one man was to the front as a leader? When all the rest hid away in dens and caves, some Barak or Gideon, or Jephthah, or Samson came boldly forward and delivered Israel. One man, standing like a figure at the head of many ciphers, soon headed victorious thousands, through faith in God. What was there but one man in the days of David? The Philistines had still triumphed over the land if the one lad had not brought back Goliath's head, and if the one man had not again and again smitten the uncircumcised in the name of the Lord. Beloved, if we should ever be reduced, as we shall not be, to one man, yet by one man will God preserve his church, and work out his great purposes. I hope we shall never go into our chamber, and shut to the door, and cry with Elias, "I only am left, and they seek my life!" No, my brother, there are more faithful men in this world than you. The Lord has yet reserved to himself his thousands that have not bowed the knee to Baal. We are this day, not one man, but many, and we all desire to live for the glory of God, and for the spread of his gospel; but if our hosts were so diminished that we could be numbered by a little child upon his fingers, still there would be no excuse for dismay, for the God of Abraham still liveth, even he who created a people to his praise by one man, of whom he says, "I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him."

Think, my brethren, of the power for good or evil which may be enshrined in a single human life. What mischievous results may come of one man! One sinner destroyeth much good, and if there were but one person left who had knowledge of the ways of vice and the words of blasphemy that one man would suffice to infect the race with his abominations. If evil be so mighty, is not good with God in it quite as powerful? We may rightly measure quantities in reference to many things, but with others it is absurd. It would be ridiculous to measure the power of fire by the quantity which burns on your hearth. Give us fit materials and a single match, and you shall see what fire can do. If ordinary fire, that may so readily be extinguished, is thus powerful, who shall venture to measure the power of the fire from heaven, which neither men nor devils can quench, the fire which fell at Pentecost, and burns among us still. Ye carry fire, ye servants of God; ye work with a heaven-sent force of boundless energy. Why, therefore, should you despair? If all the lights in the world were put out except a solitary lamp, there is enough fire in one wick to kindle all the lamps in the universe. What inch of ground remains for despair to stand upon?

Furthermore, we are bound to notice that *this one man was a lone man.* He had not only to do the work of God, but he had nobody to help him. "I called him alone." True, he was attended by Lot—a poor miserable lot he was, costing his noble uncle more trouble than he ever brought him profit. How little did he maintain or adorn the righteousness which, nevertheless, had saved him: true type of many a feeble professor in these days. Abraham was not backed by any society when he crossed the Euphrates and afterwards traversed the desert to sojourn in Canaan as a pilgrim and a stranger. If ever man was fairly cut adrift and cast upon the Lord it was the great father of the faithful. He certainly found no patronage in his onward course save the all-sufficient patronage of the Lord his God. When he came near to kings it was a source of trouble to him; it led to contention, and once to war; or else he felt bound to refuse their offers of gifts, and say as he did to the king of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." That same boastful sentence might be uttered by the State concerning some churches that I know of, but not concerning us: may God preserve us, my brethren, from every desire to come under obligations to earthly sovereignties, lest, becoming indebted to them, we should be bound to render suit and service at their bidding, such service being already due to "another king, one Jesus."

Abraham had no prestige of parentage, rank, or title. If you had looked at the stately patriarch when he trod the plains of Mamre you would have seen about him a presence, a calm dignity, a truly regal manner; but that came to him solely through his faith in God and his communion with heaven. Abraham was distinguished from other men only by the grace of God. What grander difference can there be than that which is established by the existence of faith in the heart? Thus Abraham was in the fullest sense a lone man, unsupported by any of those outward distinctions which enable some men to do more than others.

The fulfilment of his calling rested on his loneliness; for he must get away from his kindred, and wander up and down with his flocks, even as the church of God now does, dwelling in a strange land, and feeding her flock apart. When he was alone God blessed Abraham,—"I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." The blessing did not come to him in Charran while he still had some connection with the old stock; he was not yet become thoroughly nonconformist, but held in some small degree to the old house at home, and till the last link was snapped the blessing could not come. And now, my brother, if in the town or district where you live you seem to lose all your helpers; if they die one by one, and it seems as if nobody would be left to you; if even the prayer-meeting fails for want of earnest, pleading men, still persevere, for it is the lone man that God will bless. "He setteth the solitary in families." In your present forlorn condition you are learning sympathy with that lone man in Gethsemane, with that lone man upon the cross, who there vanquished all your foes. Remember that your enemies are thus beaten before you encounter them, and therefore you may readily overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Oh, be not afraid. Thus saith the Lord—"I called him alone, and blessed him,

and increased him." Grasp that, ye that dwell remote from human sympathy. Oh that our missionaries abroad may feel the rich comfort of this fact; for they full often, like lone sentinels, keep watch with eyes that long to see a friend. They are separated from intercourse with brethren, they miss the friendships which tend to comfort and confirm, but it is God that calls them alone, and he will bless them and increase them. The purer churches of to-day, standing alone as they do, because they dare not make unholy alliances with any,—standing alone, I say, in simple trust in the living Lord—ought not to be afraid with any amazement, but attempt great things for God and expect great things from God.

Once more, I cannot help asking your attention to the fact that Abraham was not only a man called from heathendom, one man, and a lone man; but he was *a man who had to be stripped yet further*. The blessing was—"Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee," but the manifest fulfilment of it was not by-and-by. As we have already seen, he must come away from his kindred and his father's house, and he must dwell in Palestine till the promised seed was born. But how long he waited for the expected heir! Twenty, yes, almost thirty years rolled away, and the man Abraham was ninety years old and nine. He is very old; and yet he is to be blessed with a son. He must number the full tale of a hundred years before Isaac can be born. This promised child was to be according to promise, and therefore it could not be born till nature was recognized as spent. As for Sarah—it was not possible that she should become a mother at her advanced age, and yet it must be so, for God had said it.

The believing pair had waited on till in an evil hour Sarah suggested a desperate attempt to fulfil the promise, in which she still firmly believed. That artifice broke down; it was a part of the divine plan that it should do so. The covenant promise was not to the seed after the flesh. When that scheme had been set aside, the Lord in his own time fulfilled his word.

Joy! joy! in the house of Abraham and Sarah. What a feast there was that Isaac was born, filling the house with laughter. But he must die! "Get thee up," said God, "and take thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." The grand old man will do it. He will get up early in the morning, and the father and the son will journey together silently; for the aged heart is too full to talk. He believes God, and is sure that even if he should actually slay his son at God's command the promise would somehow be kept. Abraham could not tell how, but it was no business of his to tell how; he was fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform. God had said to him "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and he believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead, or in some other way achieve the promise. Thus he grasped the resurrection. He laid hold on a truth which was deeper than he knew of: by his faith he realized resurrection for Isaac though as yet the Lord Jesus had not shown the way by his own rising from the dead. What a stripping Abraham had endured! Who can describe what would have been the wretchedness

of that aged parent if it had not been for his faith! Men intensely love the children of their old age. See how a grandchild is fondled by his grandsire, and thus must Isaac have been loved of Abraham; and yet he must die by his father's own hand. Oh, most miserable among the miserable must he have been who stood there on Mount Moriah, called to such a duty, his heart breaking while his soul obeyed. Such, doubtless, would have been the case had not faith been his stay. Look, then, to Abraham your father, and say is he not the greatest of men, the grandest human representative of the great Father God himself, who in the fulness of time spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all? Likest to God among mortal men art thou Abraham, and therefore well mightest thou be his friend! In thy trial brought to such a stripping we may yet envy thee as we hear the Lord saying, "Now know I that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Now, if in all these trials Abraham was yet blessed, and God's purposes were accomplished in him, can we not believe that the same God can work by us also, despite our downcastings and humiliations? When we are utterly broken and crushed may not the Lord's strength be made perfect in our weakness? Let us not question the promise because of our personal deadness and inability, but believe God without wavering, for he hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Now, brothers and sisters, here is the sum and substance of this first head of my discourse: in looking to the rock whence we are hewn, we have to see the Lord working the greatest results from apparently inadequate causes. This teaches us to cease from calculating means, possibilities, and probabilities, for we have to deal with God, with whom all things are possible. Almighty God can assuredly do whatever he says he will do. Who is to hinder him? Let the voice ring out over all the earth, and let it be heard in hell itself—who shall stay the arm of God when he wills to achieve a thing? He fears no opposition, and he needs no help. Of what did he make the world? With whom took he counsel? Who instructed him? And, if all the things that are have been spoken into existence by God alone, by his mere word, can he not yet build up his church, even if on her earthly side there should seem to be no material with which to raise her walls? Consider creation and remark what God hath wrought. See how all the millions of mankind have sprung from a single pair, because God blessed them in the beginning. But I must not multiply illustrations from nature or from history, for they rise spontaneously before your own minds. Refresh your faith by a reference to our own island history. If you would firmly believe in the conversion of the heathen remember what your fathers were when bloody rites were performed in the oak woods or amid the huge monoliths of Stonehenge. The Druidic system was as cruel and degrading as any that now curses a savage people; but the heralds of Jesus conquered. Where are the gods of the Druids now? Who reverences the golden sickle and the sacred oak? The thing is gone, as though it never had been. Why, then, should not other evil idolatries pass away? Look again at the triumph of Protestantism in this country. What was it at first? A thing utterly despised and hunted down. The stakes of Smithfield cannot be forgotten by those who dwell

so near the spot. Yet, despite all, the gospel of God triumphed, and rood, and pyx, and image were broken in contempt. Let the days of the Puritans, the palmy days when God was known in England, tell how thoroughly Bible truth won the victory. Why not again? Why not everywhere? If you desire another illustration, look at our own body of Christians? History has hitherto been written by our enemies, who never would have kept a single fact about us upon the record if they could have helped it, and yet it leaks out every now and then that certain poor people called Anabaptists were brought up for condemnation. From the days of Henry II. to those of Elizabeth we hear of certain unhappy heretics who were hated of all men for the truth's sake which was in them. We read of poor men and women, with their garments cut short, turned out into the fields to perish in the cold, and anon of others who were burnt at Newington for the crime of Anabaptism. Long before your Protestants were known of, these horrible Anabaptists, as they were unjustly called, were protesting for the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." No sooner did the visible church begin to depart from the gospel than these men arose to keep fast by the good old way. The priests and monks wished for peace and slumber, but there was always a Baptist or a Lollard tickling men's ears with holy Scripture, and calling their attention to the errors of the times. They were a poor, persecuted tribe. The halter was thought to be too good for them. At times ill-written history would have us think that they died out, so well had the wolf done his work on the sheep. Yet here we are, blessed and multiplied; and Newington sees other scenes from Sabbath to Sabbath. As I think of your numbers and efforts, I can only say in wonder—What a growth! As I think of the multitudes of our brethren in America, I may well say, What hath God wrought? Our history forbids discouragement. Never cause more hopeless once; none more hopeful to-day! It matters little what may yet happen, the cause is safe. What if all our Baptist organizations expire! What if but one man should be left faithful to the old banner, our Captain would yet triumph gloriously, for he saveth not by many nor by few. Though all else faileth, the Lord shall reign for ever and ever. This is the lesson which, I pray, we may all of us learn, and then, by faith, go forth to act upon it.

II. With great brevity, I shall dwell for a moment upon the second point, namely — THE MAIN CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS CHOSEN MAN. The text says, "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you," and it must mean,—consider him and see what he was, that you may learn from him. You perceive at once that his grand characteristic was *his faith*. In this faith many other most brilliant qualities are comprehended, but his faith lay at the bottom of all. Here is his epitaph:—"Abraham believed God." That was a mainspring of all his acts, the glory of his life, "Abraham believed God." The men that God will work by, whatever else they have not, must have faith in God. Though it is to be desired that the believer should have every mental and moral qualification, yet it is astounding how, if there be real faith, a multitude of imperfections are swallowed up, and the man is still a power. I would mention Samson as an extreme case. He was the feeblest of men, and the least fitted to be a judge in Israel; but oh,

what faith! And what wonders it achieved! A thousand men! He is like a child in his belief that God is with him. He never calculates at all; it is all the same to him whether there are a thousand or one. He flings himself upon the host, and has slain them before we can realize the deadly odds. A sword; no, he has no sword: an old jawbone of an ass is quite enough for an arm which God strengthens. See how he smites them, hip and thigh, till they lie in heaps before him. I do not suppose that it would have signified to Samson if there had been a million Philistines: with a thousand to one, a man is so thoroughly outnumbered that numbers cease to count. Here was an impossibility before him, and what could be worse. Brethren, when you do get off your feet, and must swim, you may as well have fifty fathoms of water beneath you as not, for you can but drown. In the case of faith, drowning is out of the question, and swimming is good in deep water, for there is no fear of striking against a rock. Faith glories in difficulties and infirmities, because the power of God doth rest upon her. If the work is barely possible to her strength faith hardly likes it; but she gets into her sphere when in trials far beyond human strength she laughs at impossibility, and cries, "It shall be done."

Abraham's faith was such that it led him to obedience. He was called to go out, and he went, not knowing whither he went. His faith through grace led him to perseverance; for once in God's way he did not leave it, but still abode a sojourner with God. His faith led him to expectancy; he looked for the promised seed, and not only for an Isaac but for the Messiah. So clear was the vision of his expectancy that before his eyes Christ was set forth, visibly. Did not the Saviour, who knew all things, say, "Abraham saw my day; he saw it, and was glad"?

The like faith also dwelt in the breast of Sarah; and, as we are told in the text to look to Sarah as well as Abraham, let us not fail to do so. The faith of Sarah was not little when she left home with her husband; forsaking her kith and kin from love to God, and to him whom she called "lord." She acted as if she had said to the great patriarch, "Where thou goest I will go; where thou dwellest I will dwell, for thy God is my God." Nor did the trial of her faith end with the moving; she had to take up with tent-life and all its inconveniences. It is the woman that knows the discomfort of domestic life under such circumstances. We never hear that she complained for a moment, though the cold of winter and the heat of summer are neither of them warded off by a tent. How readily she entertained her husband's guests. Though they might drop in at most unseasonable hours, or call her to bake bread in the heat of the day, she was glad to welcome strangers, for like her husband she was given to hospitality. I saw you smile, dear friends, when I mentioned domestic matters; but to me it is the solemnity of faith that men and women can not only pray and sing, but can put up with household discomforts out of obedience to God. Certain people look upon faith as a fine, airy, sentimental thing with which to roam among the stars, anticipate millenniums, and enjoy yourself in lofty contemplation. I believe far more in a faith which, whether it eats or drinks, does all to the glory of God; faith which like Sarah dwells in the tent and works there; faith which is cheerful over a scanty meal and drives away the fear of want; faith which can come down in life from

the mansion to the cottage, if providence so decrees. From Abraham's comfortable home at Ur to his gipsy wanderings in Palestine the change must have been great, but Abraham may not have felt it one half as much as Sarah, for men can rough it and live out of doors, but the housewife knows all about it, and great was her faith that she never raised a question about the propriety of her husband's course of life: and though she laughed when she was told that she should bear a son, yet remember that in the eleventh of Hebrews it is written—"Through faith also Sarah herself received strength." She was the mother of Isaac, not in the power of the flesh, but through the energy of faith, therefore look at her as the text bids you.

Christian men and Christian women, mark well this fact—that the characteristic of the person whom God will bless is that he believes and acts upon his belief. Without faith it is impossible to please God; but the man of faith is God's man. And why is this? I answer, because *faith is the only faculty of our spirit which can grasp God's ideal.* The greatest man, without faith, cannot tread in the divine footsteps. The ideas of God are as high above us as the heavens are above the earth: and therefore it is not by any fancied vastness of our feeble minds that we can ever rise into fellowship with God. Faith in the sight of God's thought whispers to herself—"I cannot understand this great thing, nor need I wish to do so. What is my understanding? Perhaps I trust to it too much already. I am called to do what God bids me, without knowing why, and I am glad it is so, for now I can worship him by bowing before his sovereign will." There is a capacity about faith for grasping divine promises and purposes, a width, a breadth, a height, a depth, which can hold the infinite truth as no other power can do. Love alone can rival it, for it embraces the infinite God himself. With the far-reaching plans and promises of God faith alone is fit to deal; carnal reason is altogether out of the lists.

Faith, too, has a great power of reception, and therein lies much of her adaptation to the divine purpose. Self-confidence, courage, resolution, cool reasoning, whatever else they are good at, are bad at humbly receiving. Those vessels which are full already are of no use as receivers; but faith presents her emptiness to God, and opens her mouth that God may fill it. Mercy needs not a jewel, but a casket into which to put her gems, and faith is exactly what she wants.

Then, again, *faith always uses the strength that God gives her.* Pride would vapour with it, and doubt would evaporate it; but faith is practical, and economically uses the talent entrusted to her. Faith has already spent all her own strength, and she so yearns to achieve her purposes that she uses all the power that God will lend her. Faith eats her manna and leaves not a morsel for worms to breed in.

Faith, too, can wait the Lord's time and place. When faith is weak men are in a dreadful hurry, but strong faith does not judge the Lord to be slack concerning his promise. As God achieves his purpose with infinite leisure, he loves a faith that is patient and looks not for its reward this day or the next. "He that believeth shall not make haste": that is to say, he shall not be ashamed or confounded by present trials so as to rush upon unbelieving actions. Faith leaves times and seasons with God to whom they belong.

God loveth faith and blesseth it too, because *it giveth him all the glory*. The true believer will not allow a trace of self-glory to linger on his hands. "Where is boasting then?" was a question once asked in the house of faith, and the searchers examined every nook and corner in every chamber to find it, but they found it not. Then they said to faith, "Where is boasting?" She answered, "I shut him out." "It is excluded," shut out, and the door fastened in its face. You do not believe God if you boast of what you are doing: least of all do you believe if you pride yourself in your faith, for faith is not mistrustful of her God but of herself. Faith looks to God to keep her alive as well as to fulfil the promise that he has made to her. This then is the kind of faith which was characteristic of Abraham, and the question is, have we got it? Have we so much of it that God can largely bless us? The comfort is that, if we have it not, the author of faith can give it to us, and if we have it in scant measure he can increase our faith.

Is not this a solid reason why you and I should take heart? You who do not believe that missions will succeed; you who readily become discouraged and discourage others; I beg you go home and seek more faith. We cannot go down to the battle with such soldiers as you; you do but encumber the host. The men that lapped are the only ones that Gideon will take to war. Send the fearful ones to the rear and let them take care of the baggage, so that when the battle is won they may have a share of the spoil, according to David's law. For actual service and warfare we must have men of faith. Cromwell found that when his men came dressed in all sorts of suits and colours they were apt to injure one another in the melee, and so he put them all in uniform. The uniform of the Prince Immanuel is faith: no man may call himself a soldier of the cross who hath it not. This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith. Brother ministers, let us take heed lest we be found qualified for our ministry in all respects except this one. You have learning, eloquence, industry, honesty, but do you so believe in God as to expect his word to act divinely on men's hearts. Do you preach believingly? Do you pray believingly? I leave the question with you.

III. I have shown you, dear friends, that God effected his purpose, and raised up a chosen nation out of one man, whose chief characteristic was his faith: and now I want you to notice OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THAT ONE MAN. I dwelt upon that while reading the chapter (Romans iv.) There is a relation between us and Abraham even as Paul assures us in the epistle to the Galatians, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Something, surely, is expected of the children of such a man as Abraham. O, for shame, thou unbelieving one! Is Abraham thy father? Art thou one of the faithful seed? Great mountains are often succeeded by low valleys. Perhaps that is the case with you; but it should not be so. The natural seed were cut off because they had no faith, let not those who are grafted in, think to do without it. It is by faith that you are a son at all. You disprove your pedigree if you tolerate unbelief. Oh! let nobody find fault with Abraham through you, and surely they may do so if they find you staggering. That "staggering" is a shocking

business: staggering at God's promises is terrible. Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief. May we never dishonour the right noble grace of faith, but so believe that all men may know Abraham's God to be our God. O for abounding spiritual life, for the God of Abraham is not the God of the dead but of the living; and we can only live unto God by faith.

Brethren, because we are the seed of Abraham, the apostle declares that the blessing of Abraham has come upon us also. I pray that all the friends and labourers in our Missionary Society may grasp the blessing of Abraham. What is it? It is a covenant favour that belongs to all who are the servants of God by faith. Here is the substance of it: "Surely blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thee." That is the grand old covenant promise and it belongs to the church. Note that the blessing is attended with multiplying. Some friends are afraid of statistics which represent the increase of the churches; I am far more afraid of those statistics which will show that we do not increase as we could wish. The blessing of the church is the increase of the church. The two go together: "Blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thee." How much are Christians to be multiplied in the world? At the present moment we do not seem to be increasing as fast as the population. I am afraid that the number of converted persons relatively to the population is scarcely as great as it was thirty years ago; we long to be multiplied at a very different rate from this—and we shall be if we have faith in our God. Hear ye the covenant word: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." These are lines from the covenant, which is sure to all the seed and can never be broken. We have been called and blessed, and it is of necessity that we increase also. We are bound to increase; we are destined to overrun the nations; the Hittites, the Hivites, the Amorites, of Popery, Mahometanism, and Idolatry are in the land, but their false systems are utterly to perish. Jesus at the head of his people shall drive them out—I mean not the men, but their evil beliefs. They may take notice to quit, for he is coming before whom all men must bow. O that ere he himself shall appear his spiritual presence in the midst of his church might suffice for victory, that all mankind might call him blessed. We are bound to increase, till the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for us, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Upon the church in her vigour shall yet descend the blessings of the tribes of Joseph. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." The success of truth is the battle of the Lord, and the increase of his church is according to his own promise, therefore in quietness we may possess our souls.

IV. Last of all consider for a minute OUR POSITION BEFORE ABRAHAM'S GOD. Do not let anything that I have said about Abraham for a moment take your mind off from the Lord himself, because the pith of it all lies here,—"*I* called him alone." Look to Abraham, but only as to the rock from which the Lord quarried his

people:" your main thought must be Jehovah himself. "*I*, *I* called him alone, and blessed him." "*I* the Lord do all these things." Look unto the everlasting God who doeth great wonders, and stay yourselves upon him.

Let us joyfully recollect that *the Lord our God has not changed*, nay, not in one jot or tittle. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." There is so far a change in the revelation of him, that it is brighter now in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, than it could have been through seer and vision; but that should be a motive for increased faith. "His arm is not shortened that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear." This God of Abraham is still almighty, and still in the midst of the covenanted ones. If the ages that have passed over his awful brow could wrinkle it and his strength could decay, then might we also decline in our confidence; but it is not so. He fainteth not, neither is weary. Our behaviour towards him, therefore, should resemble that of Abraham; and especially, representing, as we do many of us, the churches of Jesus Christ as ministers or deacons, we must never dishonour the Lord by unbelief. Doubt everything but God. Let God be true and every man a liar. This the everlasting decree which none can change,—Christ must reign; he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied; the kings of the earth must bow before him. Do not doubt it, for God hath sworn by his own life that all flesh shall see his glory. Here is the grand argument for strong faith.

Notice next that *the covenant of God has not changed*. God hath not recalled his words, nor taken a pen and struck out his promises from the record. Read the covenant words, and write them upon the door-posts of your mission-house, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This is the covenant with the one spiritual seed of Abraham, this is the marrow of it, and it has never been revoked. As I have said before, we read it now in clearer light, and understand better the fulness of its provisions, but the covenant is not disannulled. Let us go to God with any one promise of it, and we can say to him, "This is thy promise in Christ Jesus; and thou hast not spoken in secret in a dark place and withdrawn thy word and said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain." Such pleading will prevail. He will never run back from his word. Has he said, and will he not do it? Therefore let us cry, "Remember thy word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

But there is this also to be added, that this work which we desire the Lord to do is in some respects even less than that which he has done with Abraham. What ask we? Not that he should begin with one man to build up a nation, or create a church? No, but that Zion being builded, he should comfort her, and cause her waste places to rejoice. The field is the world, and the seed is ready for the sowing. The gospel is in the hands of those who have the best means of spreading it. Everything is ready for its ultimate triumph. The train is laid; we only need the heavenly fire to touch it, and the deed is accomplished. O that the work of the Lord may be speedily done; that the Lord may

carry on his work of righteousness and make a short work in the earth. I say that if God has done this greater thing, if he has excavated a nation from the quarry of Abraham, we may well expect the self-same God to keep his covenant, to multiply his church, and build her up after the similitude of a palace. The time to favour Zion, even the set time, has come. Beside that; we have been already visited by God as Abraham had not been when first he was called. Abraham had not known the Lord till he called him, but our Sion is familiar with God, for she is the city of the great king. He dwelleth in our midst by his Holy Spirit, and holy hymn and prayer rise every day from the multitudes that fear him. The Lord hath redeemed, and justified, and saved his people, and surely we may look to him to refresh and revive his heritage.

What marvellous things hath God done on the face of the earth since Abraham's days!—the stupendous marvel of incarnation, the height and depth of which none of us can measure; the wondrous work of redemption, the highest, grandest, divinest achievement of the Deity—all this is done; what may we not expect after this? You know more of God than Abraham could know; I beseech you then, trust him, at least up to the level of the patriarch. How shall we forge an excuse if we do not? What can excuse us if we distrust so glorious a God.

Brethren, it remains for me only to add this practical word. Let us throw ourselves more and more upon our God. If you have any work appointed you of the Lord, and it is within the compass of your strength, shame upon you if you do not perform it at once; but if it be beyond you, herein will God be glorified if you do it by his power. If there remaineth no might, wit, or wisdom in you, if you are deeply conscious of your weakness you are by this experience made the more fit to be used of the Lord, for when we are weak then are we strong. If you have confidence in God all things are possible to him that believeth. Oh, when will the church cast herself upon her God as men throw themselves into the stream when they mean to swim? They seek no longer for foothold, their foot leaves the spot whereon it rested, and they throw themselves trustfully upon the wave. The everlasting ocean of love and power is ready to upbear us: we shall swim gallantly to shore if we will but trust this blessed sea of love.

Let us begin to believe God and then let us act in daily life as if we believed him. The just shall live by faith. Some people have a faith which is for show, a Sunday faith, faith that cannot bear the wear and tear of every-day life; varnished and gilded, but with no pure metal in it. The faith of Abraham could lead strings of camels and flocks of sheep away from Haran to Canaan. His was the faith which could drive the tent-pin into a foreign soil, or roll up the canvas and seek another unknown halting place. The faith of Abraham is a faith that saith to wayfaring men, "Turn in, and I will get you a little water and wash your feet." It is a practical, active, living, week-day, every-day faith. I will speak very broadly and plainly, and say we need a bread-and-cheese faith, that is to say, a faith which believes that God who feeds the ravens will send us our daily bread; a faith which believes that the heavenly Father who clothes the lilies will much more clothe

his children ; the faith that can believe God about the things that are actually around it, and that does not live in the region of fiction. See how God blessed Abraham with flocks and herds, and everything temporal as well as spiritual, because he walked in reference to these things along the line of faith ; gave Lot his choice of pasturage, refused the offer of the king of Sodom, and resolutely paid the children of Heth the full price for the cave and the field. If we walk by faith in business life God may not in every case bless us with abundance of temporal mercies, but assuredly we shall be blessed. He may send us adversity, and poverty, but in these things faith is more than conqueror, glorying in tribulations also.

In the Lord's work of evangelizing the world you must have a downright, practical faith ; not a faith that will sing when the organ begins to play, and then be so busy fumbling the hymn paper as to forget the collection: not the faith of those who boast of Carey, and Marshman, and Knibb, but whose own names never appear in the subscription list for a single shilling : not a faith which sings—

"Fly abroad thou mighty Gospel."

but never lends a bit of down to make a feather for its wings.

Let us hear the scripture, as it says, "*Hearken!*" If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, "Hearken!" for you may hear the Sabbath bells ringing in the everlasting peace, and angel songs welcoming the reign of grace over all nations. Let the ears of deaf unbelief be unstopped, for the whole earth echoes with the praises of the Lord. Say not that the day is distant. Hearken! Let faith be the listener, and she will hear across the ages which divide us from the gladsome period. Then shall you listen all day and all night long for many a year, but never hear the roll of drum or roar of cannon. Hearken! Ye shall hear from the islands of the sea, and from the once benighted continents, psalms and hymns, and holy songs, ascending unto the one Jehovah and to his Christ. Hearken! for ears were never gladdened with sweeter music.

Then *look!* till you see the temples of false gods crumbling into dust. See how the shrines are tottering, and the idols breaking as though smitten with a rod of iron. Mohammed's crescent wanes, never to wax again ; and she, of the Seven Hills, is hated of the kings, and they burn her with fire. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth!" Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. They fall! They fall! They are as the slain. The day breaketh, and the shadows flee away. O ye watchers that look for the dawning, fall not asleep through sorrowful weariness. The morning cometh. It shall not tarry. Do you doubt it? Know ye not that the Lord reigneth? Is he not the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." If you doubt it, dissolve your Missionary Society, and do not pretend to do a work in which you have no faith ; but if you believe in the triumph of God's work, and that you are called to it, behave worthily to so divine an enterprise. God do so to you as you deal with him in this matter. Amen.

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE DIVINE CALL FOR MISSIONARIES.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING APRIL 22ND, 1877, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."—Isaiah vi. 8.

BRETHREN, the heathen are perishing, and there is but one way of salvation for them, for there is but one name given under heaven among men whereby they must be saved. God in the glorious unity of his divine nature is calling for messengers who shall proclaim to men the way of life. Out of the thick darkness my ear can hear that sound mysterious and divine, "Whom shall I send?" If ye will but listen with the ear of faith ye may hear it in this house to-day—"Whom shall I send?" While the world lieth under the curse of sin the living God, who willeth not that any should perish but that they should come to repentance, is seeking for heralds to proclaim his mercy; he is asking even in pleading terms for some who will go forth to the dying millions and tell the wondrous story of his love—"Whom shall I send?" As if to make the voice more powerful by a threefold utterance we hear the sacred Trinity enquire, "Who will go for us?" The Father asks, "Who will go for me and invite my far-off children to return?" The Son enquires, "Who will seek for me my redeemed but wandering sheep?" The Holy Spirit demands, "In whom shall I dwell, and through whom shall I speak that I may convey life to the perishing multitudes?" God in the unity of his nature crieth, "Whom shall I send?" and in the trinity of his persons he asketh, "Who will go for us?" Happy shall we be to-day if earnest responses shall be heard in this house—"Here am I, send me." It is ours, at any rate, very solemnly to put the matter before you, brethren in Christ, and while we shall try to plead Jehovah's cause we trust the Holy Spirit may be here, saying of one and another, quite unknown to us, "Separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them." Yea, may the constraining voice of the special call of grace come to the ear of some here present who shall respond like young Samuel and say, "Here am I, for thou didst call me."

First, we shall this morning consider *the vision of glory* in reference to the offer of service made by the prophet: the vision which he saw; and secondly, *the vision of ordination* which he did more than see, for his lips were touched. Thirdly, we will speak upon *the divine voice;* and conclude by dwelling upon *the earnest response.*

I. Reverently, and with all our hearts attent, let us gaze upon THE VISION OF GLORY which Isaiah saw. It was necessary for him to see it in order that he might be brought into the condition of heart out of which should come the full consecration expressed in—"Here am I, send me." Observe what he saw. He saw, first, *the supreme glory of God.* "I saw Adonai," saith he, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Was it Jesus that he saw? Was this one of the anticipations of his future incarnation? Probably so, for John writes in his twelfth chapter, at the forty-first verse, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake *of him*,"—referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. We will not, however, insist upon that interpretation, for the word Adonai, doubtless, included at times the whole Godhead, and therefore the vision may have represented the Lord himself revealed in visible form. As to his absolute essence, eye cannot behold the Lord, but he chooseth to make an apparition of himself; appearing among men in such a form as may come under the ken of their senses. Now, brethren, we know of nothing that will supply a better motive for missionary work, or for Christian effort of any sort, than a sight of the divine glory. This is one of the strongest impulses a soul can feel. Behold, O believers in the divine word, at this day the Lord God, even Jehovah, is not dethroned, but sitteth on the throne of his glory. Some know him not, and others deny him and blaspheme him, but he is still God over all blessed for ever.

See the patience of his infinite majesty,—he *sits* in calm glory upon his eternal throne. The nations furiously rage and imagine a vain thing: "he that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh; the Lord doth have them in derision." Still are his purposes fulfilled, and his soul abides in its serenity; he is the same and of his years there is no end. He sitteth as a King, observe, *upon a throne;* he never renounces his sovereignty and dominion. All things still feel the omnipotence of the reign of God. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." The rebellions of men, can they ever shake his firm dominion? No, but out of their wildest uproar he fashioneth order, and by their most violent resistance he worketh his own purposes. After all the Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof. Still, despite all the hurly-burly of war, and all the wickedness of men in the dark places of the earth, and the detestable blasphemies of the heathen against the Most High, the Lord sitteth on a throne which never can be shaken.

Nor is it a mean throne either, nor one of little dignity; it is "high and lifted up." It is not merely above all other thrones by way of greater power, but over them all by way of supreme dominion over them, for he is King of kings and Lord of lords. I wish, dear brethren, we could get a glimpse of the glory and power and dominion which belong to the Most High, for if we did, though it would certainly humble us in the very dust, yet it would fire us with a consecrated indignation against

those who set up other gods; it would fill us with a sacred courage to do and dare anything against these blind, and deaf, and dumb deities to whom it is almost too great an honour to pour contempt upon them; and it would make us feel confidence in the ultimate success of the cause and kingdom of the living God. Since even now, while he restrains his hand he sitteth upon a throne high and lifted up, and is even now the Governor among the nations; surely the day shall come when all nations shall behold his throne and bow before it, and God shall be seen to be Lord over all. The God whom we serve is able to give victory to his own cause. Here is *an impulse* for us in all warring for his cause and crown.

If you choose to take the text as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, what a delight it is for us to think that there is no more for him the thorny crown and the cruel lance and the contemptuous spittle, but he who bowed his head to death has left the dead, no more to die, and ascended to the right hand of God, even the Father; God having highly exalted him, so that he now sitteth upon a throne high and lifted up. This, in fact, is the origin of our commission—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Because all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, therefore we are to go forth and subdue the people under his feet. O when will his church fully believe in the glory of her Lord, and rejoice therein, so that his power shall fill her, as his train aforetime filled the temple. If we cannot behold his greatest glories, yet we pray that his presence by the Holy Spirit, like the perfumed smoke and the resplendent skirts of his robes, may be known among us and fill us with adoration. Did the posts of the door move at that august presence? Let our hearts be moved also as in lowliest adoration we bow before him who is Lord and Christ.

But then Isaiah saw also *the court of the great King;* he beheld the glorious attendants who perpetually perform homage, nearest to his throne. He says, "Above it (or rather above him) stood the seraphims," not implying that their feet rested upon the earth, or upon any other solid substance, but that they were stationary around and above the great King, poised in mid air in a circle, like a rainbow round about the throne, or as a body guard surrounding the throne of majesty. There were they, waiting to know his pleasure, on the wing ready for any errand, and adoring while they waited. These seraphim may furnish us with a pattern for Christian service: as the throne of God becomes the impulse to that service, so let these serve us as *the model.* They dwell near the Lord, and even so should we; he is their centre and their bliss, even so should he be ours. But I specially note that they were burning ones, for such is the meaning of the word seraphims, a term applied in the Hebrew to the fiery flying serpents of the wilderness. These courtiers of the great King were creatures of fire, ablaze with ardour; all glowing and shining they worship him, "who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flame of fire." Jehovah, who is a consuming fire, can only fitly be served by those who are on fire, whether they be angels or men. Hence that solemn question, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Is. xxxiii. 14). None can do this but the man on fire with love divine.

In the presence of that consuming fire, it is not possible for lukewarmness or indifference to exist, they would be utterly burned up. To act as courtier before the burning throne of God requires a seraphic or burning spirit, and if we become lethargic and soulless we shall not be counted worthy to be employed on divine errands. Far hence, then, let all coolness of love and slumbering of spirit be removed. May the Lord make us, like John the Baptist, burning and shining lights.

These courtiers of God were burning ones, and they are also pictured to us—for remember these are only representations of things actually invisible, and seen only in vision—as having six wings. Such are his servants, full of motion, full of life. Some that I know of who profess to serve the Lord seem to have no wing at all, but are stolid and inactive, more like the sloth than the seraph, having more weight than wing. Those who come near him should be all in motion, quick, active, willing, awake, energetic, ready to fly upon the Lord's business with a mighty swiftness; in a word, sixfold should be their wings, that they may not tarry nor tire, nor linger nor loiter in the way. Have we such readiness of mind as this?

Having life and motion, these glorious spirits use their powers with prudence and discretion. They use not all their wings for flight, but with twain each one covered his face, for even they cannot gaze upon the dazzling brightness of Jehovah's throne, and therefore in humble shamefacedness of awe they adore with veiled countenance! "With twain he covered his feet," or his body, or his lower parts, for the seraph remembers that even though sinless he is yet a creature, and therefore he conceals himself in token of his nothingness and unworthiness in the presence of the thrice Holy One. The middle pair of wings was used for flight, for mere bashfulness and humility cannot offer complete adoration, there must be active obedience and readiness of heart for service. Thus they have four wings for adoration and two for active energy; four to conceal themselves, and two with which to occupy themselves in service; and we may learn from them that we shall serve God best when we are most deeply reverend and humbled in his presence. Veneration must be in larger proportion than vigour, adoration must exceed activity. As Mary at Jesus' feet was preferred to Martha and her much serving, so must sacred reverence take the first place, and energetic service follow in due course. The angels do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word, and thus they excel: our excellence must lie in the same direction—the union of worship with work in due proportions. The covering of the face is as needful as the flight; the burning one is as seraphic in the veiling of his feet as in the stretching of his wings. Let us pray the Lord to fill us with the divine enthusiasm which is the work of the Holy Ghost, and so make us burning ones; and then when he has winged us with sacred energy may he make us humble in mind, removing from us all vain curiosity, so that we shall not attempt to gaze with uncovered eye on the great Incomprehensible, and taking away all unhallowed presumption, so that we use no proud bravado, but cover our feet in the solemn presence of the Holy One. Let us ask God to make us ready to every good word and work, swift to go anywhere and everywhere, as he may call us, being as it were six-winged in the service of our God.

Again, another part of the vision of Isaiah in the temple was *the perpetual song*, for these sacred beings continually cried, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Brothers and sisters, let us take this cry to be the life song of each one of us. Adore ye the holy God, perfection's self. Whatever he shall do with you, bless him, and call him holy still. Find no fault with his dispensations; never dare to quarrel with any of his ways. Holy, holy, holy, is he in all things. In creation, providence, and redemption he is holy, holy, holy. Praise him with ardour; be not content to call him holy once, but dwell upon the theme. Extol the Lord with all your might; raise again, and again, and again the sacred song. Adore not alone the Father, but the Son, and the ever-blessed Spirit: let the Trinity in Unity be the object of your perpetual adoration.

> "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
> Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
> Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
> God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!"

While you praise his holiness do not forget his power, but adore him as "Jehovah of hosts." He is as great as he is good, as high as he is holy, as potent as he is pure. He created the heavens, and the earth, and all the host of them. Legions of angels do his bidding; hosts of intelligences wait his call; all forces of nature, animate and inanimate, march at his command; from the crash of thunder to the flight of an insect all things are at his beck. Hosts of birds migrate at his direction, hosts of fishes swarm the sea at his call, hosts of locusts and caterpillars devour the fields at his order. His armies are innumerable, and all living things are in their regiments a part of his camp, which is very great. Men also, whether they will or not, shall be subservient to his supreme dominion; their armies and their navies fulfil his decrees even when they think not of him. He is Lord of all. Exult in this, and let your hearts be brave because of it.

And then dwell, that you may feel a missionary spirit, on that last part of the song, "The whole earth is filled with his glory," for so it really is in one sense. "Jehovah of hosts is the fulness of the whole earth." God is glorious all over the world; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of his glory, everything adores him except that wandering, wayward creature, man. Turn this ascription, for it may be so read, into a wish: "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Read it, if you please, as a prophecy: "The whole earth shall be filled with his glory," and then go you forward, O ye servants of the Most High, with this resolve, that in his hands you will be the means of fulfilling the prophecy by spreading abroad the knowledge of his name among the sons of men. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and he must reign over it. Are you going to succumb to the modern theory that the world is never to be converted to God? Is human history to end with the triumph of the devil over the church of God? Is the Lord about to give up the present battle of good with evil with feeble men as the instruments, and are the conditions of the conflict to be changed altogether? Is the Holy Spirit to fail until an earthly kingdom is set up for the Lord Jesus? Is the gospel never to spread among the

heathen? Is Christ to come upon an unenlightened heathen world, with Mahomet the false prophet still unconquered, and the harlot of Rome still upon her seven hills, and all the idols in their places? Is the battle which now glorifies God by the weakness of man to be fought out in another manner? You may believe it if you will, and go to the beds of your inglorious sloth; but methinks there is something more worthy of faith than that, namely, that God will be victorious all along the line in the present battle and in the present style of conflict. By his church, his word, and his Spirit he means to win the victory; by the testimony of weak, feeble men to the gospel of his grace he means to conquer the powers of darkness. Foot to foot with Satan has he stood since our Lord went up to heaven, near these two thousand years, and he will not end this wrestling match till he has given his foe a deadly fall, and the shout shall go up from a ransomed world, "Hallelujah! hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Our prayers will never be ended till we see the desire of pious David fulfilled when he said, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen, and amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." We are looking and labouring for that consummation, and we believe that we shall realize it, though it looks most improbable, especially just now when the heathen are converting our missionaries instead of the missionaries converting the heathen, when we have had bishops turned into Zulus instead of Zulus into Christians, and several other instances less known to evil fame. We believe in the conquest of the world because we believe in the omnipotence of God. Nothing short of "dominion from sea to sea" dare we ask in prayer or seek in service for our Lord Jesus. The idols must be utterly abolished, error and sin must fly before the light of truth and holiness, the ends of the earth must yet see the salvation of our God, and the whole earth must be filled with his glory.

II. Let us now turn our thoughts to THE VISION OF ORDINATION. This man Isaiah was to go forth in Jehovah's name, but in order to preparation for so high an embassage he must undergo a process peculiar but necessary. He was brought into a state, which to human judgment would seem to disqualify him for all future usefulness, crushing the courage out of him, and leaving him like a bruised reed. By reason of the glorious vision which he saw there was no strength left in him; he was cast down as low as he could well go with a sense of his own utter unworthiness, and felt himself to be less than nothing. In the presence of God he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." "Alas, alas, alas," saith he, "woe has taken possession of my soul; I am destroyed by it." Yes, dear brother, and this is our way to success: God will never do anything with us till he has first of all undone us. We must be taken to pieces and made to undergo a process very like destruction, and then we shall be new-fashioned according to a nobler mould, more fit to be used by our great Lord. I shall not regret if every brother here called to the work of the Lord shall feel as if he could not go on with it, and shall mourn daily his incapacity, his unworthiness, and failure; for it is good for us to be laid in the dust. Downward in breakage, in crushing, in grinding, in making into dust we must go, for this is the way to be made strong in the Lord,

and in the power of his might. The death of self is the life of grace. When we are weak then are we strong. We can only rise to ability for the noblest errands by being emptied of all self-sufficiency, and filled with the all-sufficient Spirit.

Observe, next, that *he made a confession of sin while thus prostrate.* He said, "I am a man of unclean lips." Why does he lament the uncircumcision of his lips rather than the evil of his heart? It was partly because he longed to join the seraphim in their song but felt his lips unfit; and yet more because he was a prophet, and therefore his lips were the instruments of his office, and he was most conscious of sin where he felt most the need of grace. I know not that Isaiah had ever kept back any part of the truth, or that he had spoken in uncomely tones, or that in his work of prophecy he had in anything been unfaithful, but yet he felt his shortcomings. There was nothing about him that you and I could have seen to find fault with, but *he* saw it, and felt it, and what minister is there that God has ever sent who does not when he surveys his ministry feel that he is a man of unclean lips? Often and often does our soul say, "Oh that these lips had language; they are poor, dumb things that will not speak aright. O that instead of flesh they were flame, that we might let fall a burning torrent of persuasions, entreaties, and solicitations which should run amid multitudes of men like fire in dry stubble." But it is not so with us: we are often chill and lifeless, and so we are made to mourn that we have unclean lips. Who that ever saw the glory of God, or the love of Christ, would refuse to join in this confession?

And, then, this man of God *felt also a deep sense of the sin of the people among whom he dwelt.* He cried, "I dwell among a people of unclean lips." I do not think a man can be a good missionary if he winks at the sin that surrounds him. Unless it stinks in his nostrils, unless it makes his soul boil with holy indignation, unless like Paul his heart is stirred in him, how can he speak as he should speak the message of his God? Familiarity with evil too often takes off the edge of tender feeling; men readily cease to weep over the sin which is always before their eyes. You may look upon the superstitions of Rome till you almost admire the gallant show, and I suppose you may regard heathen temples till the majesty of their architecture may make you forget the infamy of their purpose; but it must not be so: we must feel that we dwell among a people of unclean lips, and we must bear their sin upon our hearts, repenting for them if they will not repent, and breaking our hearts over them because their hearts are as adamant against their God. Only in such a frame of mind shall we be fit to go forth in God's name.

And do you notice that *he had a sacred awe upon him because of the divine presence?* You see how bowed down he was because his eyes had seen the King, the Lord of hosts. O favoured servant of God! Esaias, thou art honoured above thy fellows to behold God's throne and glory! What would not you and I give if we might but have stood in the temple and peered within the doorway, and gazed into the smoke, and have seen some glimpse of the brightness; but *he* never exulted in it, on the contrary he cried, "Woe is me!" There is no thought of the dignity to which the marvellous sight has lifted him, but deep in the dust he

cries, "I am undone, for I have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Now this awe-full sense of the divine presence is necessary to make a man serve the Lord fitly and acceptably. Forget that God is all around you, forget that you live in his presence and are his servant, get away from him, and you can be careless, you can restrain your zeal and your conscience may be at ease; but let a man only feel that God sees him, and know that he is under his immediate guidance, and he will be aroused at once to do the will of the Lord on earth after the fashion in which it is done in heaven. He will put forth all his energies, because God should be served with our best; but conscious that when he has done his best he has fallen short of the glory of God, he will be very humble, as those should be who are in such a presence. O Lord Jesus, by thy Holy Spirit give us an overpowering sense of thy presence now. If thou wilt but do this we shall be a tabernacle full of worshippers first, and of workers afterwards, and shall cheerfully adore thee and labour for thee.

In this second part of the prophet's vision the most notable thing is *the way in which God met and removed his servant's infirmities.* His unclean lips were his great impediment; where he most needed power he most felt his infirmity, and so there came a seraph with the golden tongs or snuffers, and took a burning coal from off the altar, and touched his lips with it. What does this mean? We have the explanation: "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Fellowship with the great sacrifice, the application of one of the coals which consumed the ever blessed Jesus is the way to make our lips ready for preaching. I believe that most of my dear hearers have the application of the live coal to their hearts so as to have been purged therewith, for we do believe in him who died for us; so that we are resting in his great sacrifice. But in order to be prepared for service we want to have that word yet again touching us till we feel the fire. We need fellowship with the pangs and woes of Christ; we need to feel as if we too wished to be consumed for others, as he was consumed for us. The disinterested love which made him die must come and influence us, that we may be willing to die for others too. We want just that. Did it not make you feel joy in your fellow men the other day when you read of the poor men in the pit, and of their gallant deliverers? One rejoiced that manhood could exhibit such heroism. "We can do no more," said some, "it is death to go into the pit again: we cannot rescue the poor fellows, and it is idle to throw away life for no purpose." The brave men who had been toiling there in the bowels of the earth, finding themselves in the presence of almost certain death, might well have stood back; but not so the bold Welshmen. One said, "If it is death to go and save them, I will go, death or no death," and then others came forward and said they would go also. Had I been there I should have been ready to weep, because, being unskilled in the miner's craft, I should have been helpless to assist, but they should not have lacked my heartiest cheers and most ardent prayers, nor aught else that I could have done. Assuredly since Jesus Christ has died for us, we need to be touched with something of that same zeal for the rescue of others from eternal ruin. A coal from off the altar where he was consumed must be laid on us that we may feel willing to make any sacrifice for his dear

sake and for the souls of men. That touching of the lip was the Lord's way of setting the prophet on fire where the fire was needed. He wanted lips blistered with the griefs of Christ, and burning with love to men's souls, and he had such lips bestowed upon him by his God, and so was he fit to go and preach in the name of the Lord.

Here, then, is the true ordination for a Christian worker. Yourself nothing, lying in the dust with confession of sin; but yourself purged by the great sacrifice of Calvary, and your tongue compelled to tell the tale because you have felt such royal mercy, such free mercy, such unspeakable mercy, that if you did not speak of it the very stones in the street would cry out against you. You want this for your preparation, and if you have it, my brother, you have obtained your ordination from the great Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, and you need no other.

III. When a man is prepared for sacred work he is not long before he receives a commission. We come then to think of THE DIVINE CALL. I feel in my soul, though I cannot speak it out, an inward grieving sympathy with God, that God himself should have to cry from his throne, "Whom shall I send?" Alas, my God, are there no volunteers for thy service! What, all these priests and sons of Aaron, will none of these run upon thine errand? And all these Levites, will not one of them offer himself? No, not one. Ah, it is grievous, grievous beyond all thought, that there should be such multitudes of men and women in the church of God who nevertheless seem unfit to be sent upon the Master's work, or at least never offer to go, and he has to cry, "Whom shall I send?" What, out of all these saved ones, no willing messengers to the heathen! Where are his ministers? Will none of these cross the seas to heathen lands? Here are thousands of us working at home. Are none of us called to go abroad? Will none of us carry the gospel to regions beyond? Are none of us bound to go? Does the divine voice appeal to our thousands of preachers and find no response, so that again it cries, "Whom shall I send?" Here are multitudes of professing Christians making money, getting rich, eating the fat and drinking the sweet, is there not one to go for Christ? Men travel abroad for trade, will they not go for Jesus? They even risk life amid eternal snows, are there no heroes for the cross? Here and there a young man perhaps with little qualification, and no experience, offers himself, and he may or may not be welcomed, but can it be true that the majority of educated, intelligent Christian young men are more willing to let the heathen be damned than to let the treasures of the world go into other hands. Alas, for some reason or other, I am not going to question the reasons, God himself may look over all his church, and, finding no volunteers, may utter the pathetic cry, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

But there were the six-winged seraphim. Why did not the Lord send them? Ah, brethren, that he might have done, but it is not according to the order of the gospel dispensation, for he is pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, and the preachers must be men like the rest of mankind. It is great condescension on his part that he has chosen men, and unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak, but he has given this honour to us, putting his treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the

power may be all his own. We ought to rejoice in this, but it is sad, surpassingly sad, that from amongst myriads of willing seraphim God's cry should come to unwilling men, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

I call to your attention again the fact that this is the voice of the one God, and it is also the question of the sacred Trinity: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The Father, Son and Spirit thus question us, shall not the threefold voice be regarded?

Notice the particular kind of man for whom this voice is seeking. It is a man who must be *sent*, a man under impulse, a man under authority—"Whom shall I send?" But it is a man who is quite willing to go, a volunteer, one who in his inmost heart rejoices to obey—"Who will go for us?" What a strange mingling this is! "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," and yet "taking the oversight of the flock of God not by constraint but willingly." Irresistible impulse and cheerful choice, omnipotent compulsion and joyful eagerness most mysteriously combine! We must have a mingling of these two. I do not know that I could put into so many words that wonderful feeling of freeness and overpowering impulse, of necessity and freedom, but our experience understands what our language cannot express. We are willing, and yet a power is over us; we are willing in the day of God's power, coming forth as freely as the dew-drops from the womb of the morning, and yet as truly the product of divine power as they are. Such must God's servant be. I wonder if I echo and re-echo the voice of God this morning whether it will find out amidst the thousands in this house, and the thousands that may read this word, some loving responses in at least a few chosen hearts? "Whom shall I send?"—it is Jehovah's voice. "And who will go for us?"—it is the voice of the bleeding Lamb, it is the voice of the loving Father, it is the voice of the ever blessed Spirit. Does no one leap up at this moment and freely offer himself? Must I speak in vain? Ah, that were a light thing—must the voice from heaven be in vain? Did the child Samuel reply "Here am I, for thou didst call me," and will no full-grown man answer to the voice of the Eternal? With your hearts and consciences I leave it.

IV. Now comes the last point, and that is THE EARNEST RESPONSE. The reply of Isaiah was "Here am I; send me." I think I see in that response a consciousness of his being in a certain position which no one else occupied, which rendered it incumbent upon *him* to say, "Here am I." There was no one else in the temple, no one else saw that vision, and therefore to him the voice of the Lord came as directly and personally as if there were not another man in all the world. "Here am I." Now, brethren, if at any time the mission field lacks workers (it is a sad thing that it should be so, but yet so it is), should not that fact make each man look to himself and say, "Where am I? What position do I occupy towards this work of God? May I not be placed just where I am because I can do what others could not?" Some of you young men especially, without the ties of family to hold you in this country, without a large church around you, or not having yet plunged into the sea of business, you, I say, are standing where in the ardour of your first love you might fitly say, "Here am I." And if God has endowed you with any wealth, given you any talent, and placed you in a favourable

position, you are the man who should say, "Perhaps I have come to the kingdom for such a time as this; I may be placed where I am on purpose that I may render essential help to the cause of God. Here at any rate I am; I feel the presence of the glorious God; I see the skirts of his garments as he reveals himself to me, I almost hear the rush of seraphic wings as I perceive how near heaven is to earth, and I feel in my soul I must give myself up to God. I feel in my own heart my indebtedness to the Christ of God; I see the need of the heathen, I love them for Jesus' sake; the fiery coal is touching my lip even now: *here am I!* Thou hast put me where I am; Lord, take me as I am, and use me as thou wilt." May the divine Spirit influence some of you who greatly love my Lord till you feel all this.

Then you observe that he makes a full surrender of himself. "Here am I." Lord, I am what I am by thy grace, but here I am; if I am a man of one talent, yet here I am; if I am a man of ten, yet here I am; if in youthful vigour, here I am; if of maturer years, here I am. Have I substance? here I am. Do I lack abilities? Yet still I made not my own mouth, nor did I create my infirmities; here I am. Just as I am, as I gave myself up to thy dear Son to be redeemed, so give I myself up again to be used for thy glory, because I am redeemed, and am not my own, but bought with a price. "Here I am."

Isaiah gave himself up to the Lord none the less completely because his errand was so full of sadness. He was not to win men, but to seal their doom by putting before them truth which they would be sure to reject. We read, "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Thank God ours is not so hard a task; the Spirit of God is with us, and men are turned from darkness to light. Ought we not to be all the more eager to go? It is a point of great weight, an argument most telling. Do not refuse to feel its power, but yield yourselves up to God, seeing that he calls you to the most happy and blessed work which even he himself could commit to you.

Then comes Isaiah's prayer for authority and anointing. If we read this passage rightly we shall not always throw the emphasis upon the last word, "me," but read it also thus, "Here am I, *send* me." He is willing to go, but he does not want to go without being sent, and so the prayer is, "Lord, *send* me. I beseech thee of thine infinite grace qualify me, open the door for me, and direct my way. I do not need to be forced, but I would be commissioned. I do not ask for compulsion, but I do ask for guidance. I would not run of my own head under the notion that I am doing God service. *Send* me then, O Lord, if I may go; guide me, instruct me, prepare me, and strengthen me." There is a combination of willingness and holy prudence—"Here I am; send me." I feel certain that some of you are eager to go for my Lord and Master wherever he appoints. Keep not back I pray you. Brother, make no terms with God. Put it, "Here am I; send me—where thou wilt, to the wildest region, or even to the jaws of death. I am thy soldier; put me in the front of the battle if thou wilt, or bid me lie in

the trenches; give me gallantly to charge at the head of my regiment, or give me silently to sap and mine the foundations of the enemy's fortresses. Use me as thou wilt; *send me,* and I will go. I leave all else to thee; only here I am, thy willing servant, wholly consecrated to thee." That is the right missionary spirit, and may God be pleased to pour it out upon you all, and upon his people throughout the world. To me it seems that if a hundred were to leap up and each one exclaim, "Here am I; send me," it would be no wonder. By the love and wounds and death of Christ, by your own salvation, by your indebtedness to Jesus, by the terrible condition of the heathen, and by that awful hell whose yawning mouth is before them, ought you not to say, "Here am I; send me"? The vessel is wrecked, the sailors are perishing; they are clinging to the rigging as best they can; they are being washed off one by one! Good God, they die before our eyes, and yet there is the lifeboat stanch and trim. We want men! Men to man the boat! Here are the oars, but never an arm to use them! What is to be done? Here is the gallant boat, able to leap from billow to billow, only men are wanted! Are there none? Are we all cravens? A man is more precious than the gold of Ophir. Now, my brave brethren, who will leap in and take an oar for the love of Jesus, and yon dying men? And ye brave women, ye who have hearts like that of Grace Darling, will not ye shame the laggards, and dare the tempest for the love of souls in danger of death and hell? Weigh my appeal in earnest and at once, for it is the appeal of God. Sit down and listen to that sorrowful yet majestic demand, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and then respond, "Ready, aye ready; ready for anything to which our Redeemer calls us." Let those who love him, as they perceive all around them the terrible token of the world's dire need, cry in an agony of Christian love, "Here am I; send me."

By C. H. SPURGEON.

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ALL THE PEOPLE AT WORK FOR JESUS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 9TH, 1877, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT CHRIST CHURCH, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD,

On Behalf of the London Missionary Society.

I HAVE taken two texts from two successive chapters of the book of Joshua: the first is from Joshua the seventh, at the third verse. The spies who were sent to Ai returned to Joshua and said to him, "*Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai.*" This policy led to a disastrous defeat; and our other text gives us the Lord's command concerning the new attack. You will find it in the eighth of Joshua and the first verse: "*The Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.*"

The two texts may be condensed into—first, *the advice of the spies*, to employ only a part of the people in the assault upon Ai,—"Let not all the people go up"; and, secondly, *the command of God*, to let every fighting man go forth to the war,—"Take all the people of war with thee."

Brethren, like Israel, we are called to war, and we have a greater than Joshua at our head, in whose name we conquer. There is an inheritance which as yet has been held by the adversary, and in the name of God we have to drive him out. We are likely to experience difficulties very similar to those which were met with by the tribes; and I doubt not that their history (is it not written for our learning?) will prove exceedingly interesting to us, if we have a mind to consider it. We shall meet with the same defeats as they did if we fall into the same sins, and we shall win like victories if we are obedient to the commands which God has given us, which are very similar to those addressed to Israel of old. As in a glass we see ourselves in the twelve tribes, from the first day even until now, and in the texts before us there is a lesson for us, which may God, by his grace, enable us to learn. I pray the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds while we read in the book of the

wars of the Lord, and as soldiers of Christ learn from warriors of old time.

I. Let us consider THE ADVICE OF THE SPIES which led to such a shameful defeat.

And here we shall have to deal with *the error of supposing that a part only of the church will be sufficient to perform the work of the whole*;—that a large proportion may be idle, and that the rest will be quite enough to fight the Lord's battles. I feel it to be an error which, though not perhaps theoretically held by any of us, is practically to be seen abroad in our churches, and needs to be met and put to an end.

In Joshua's day *this error sprang up among the Israelites because, on account of their sins, God was displeased with them.* The commencement of the chapter tells us that the Lord God was wroth because the children of Israel had committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for the sin of Achan the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people. That was the real reason of their defeat before Ai; but out of that secret cause grew the more manifest source of defeat—which was, that because God was displeased with them they were left to themselves, and hence they adopted a fatal policy. When God is in the midst of a church he guides its counsels, and directs the hearts of men to go about his work in the wisest manner. Is it not an old saying that "Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad"? And is not the heathen proverb the shadow of the fact that men become foolish when they have broken the commands of God, and thus they are chastened for one fault by being permitted to fall into another? Even upon the Lord's own people a measure of judicial blindness may come. You may depend upon it that when it becomes a doctrine that only special classes of men are to be expected to work in the church, there is some great wrong in the background. In that church which most of all has fallen into this fallacy, and has drawn the sharpest line between those called the clergy and the poor unfortunate laymen outside, who perchance may do *something* for God, but who cannot be expected, or indeed allowed to do anything in particular: in that church, I say, the deadliest errors have found a home. We, too, may take it for granted that when we begin to leave Christian work to be performed by a minister, or the visitation of the poor to be solely done by a paid missionary, we have some Achan in the camp, with a goodly Babylonish garment hidden in his tent. There must be an accursed thing somewhere or other which has caused us to be left to so gross a folly: either worldliness, or lukewarmness, or love of ease, or deep declension of heart must lie at the root of this slovenly and sluggish policy. It is not God's mind that it should be so; and he has evidently left us to ourselves when this fatal method is adopted. When the Holy Ghost rests upon the church this folly is practically avoided, nay, it is not even thought of. God grant to the churches represented here to-day that they may walk in such soundness of doctrine and have such spirituality of life that they may be full of the divine presence, and never dream for a moment of sending a portion only of their members out to war, and leave the rest to sit still! We cannot leave the battles of our Lord to be fought by mercenary troops; the whole army of men made willing in the day of the Lord's power must go out under the command of our divine Joshua to meet the foe.

Furthermore, *this evil policy arose out of presumption engendered by success.* But a little while ago all Israel had marched around Jericho for seven days, and on the seventh day, when they shouted, the city walls fell flat to the ground. Perhaps they began to say, "Did those massive walls fall when we compassed them about? O Israel, thou art a great nation! And did they fall with nothing but a shout? Then the Hittite and the Hivite, and every other enemy, shall flee before us like chaff before the wind! What need can there be to carry all our baggage up the hill to Ai? What need to march so many men? Two or three thousand will be quite sufficient to carry that small city by storm. We can do wonders, and therefore we need not put forth all our strength!"

Brethren, many dangers surround success; it is not much of it that any of us can bear. The full sail needs much ballast lest the boat be overset. When in this or any other part of the world the church sees many converts as the fruit of her labours, when there are great gatherings, and a good deal of shouting, great interest excited, and multitudinous conversions, it is very natural to calculate that the work has been easily done, and needs no very severe or general effort. The idea is fostered that there is no need now for continued house-to-house visitation, no need for more missionaries, no need for regular plodding service in school and cottage-meeting, no need to set our young men and women to work for Christ! The drill and organization of the regular army is in danger of being lightly esteemed. Blow the trumpet, and the walls will come down easily enough. Jericho has fallen with shouting and marching, let us gather ourselves together and show that we are a mighty people, who no longer need to go up unanimously and laboriously in rank and order to the fight, as our fathers did.

Ah, brethren, this evil spirit must be exorcised, for it cometh from the devil. God will not bless us if we tolerate this spirit. Why, some of us are too great altogether for our Lord Jesus to use in his work. Like Saul's armour, we are unfit for our David to put on if Goliath is to be slain. We must be more sensible of weakness, more mindful that the conversion of souls is the work of omnipotence, or we shall see but little done. We must ourselves believe more fully in the need of earnest work for God, and put forth all our strength, and strain every sinew for him, knowing that it is his power that worketh in us mightily when we strive with all our hearts. We must learn that our great Leader means us not only to shout and blow rams' horns, but to employ all the strength of every man in our ranks in his glorious cause. May we be delivered from the presumption which leads to the foolish course which Israel pursued.

Let us not forget that these children of Israel were *forgetting their commission and violating the command of God.* It is a terrible truth that the tribes had been brought out of Egypt that they might be the executioners of divine vengeance upon races which had committed capital crimes, for which the Lord had condemned them to be rooted out. The reward of the ministers of justice was to be the land which the infamous ones had polluted. They were charged to make no alliances with them, nor to intermarry with them, but to execute them for their crimes; and the commission was not given to some of the

Israelites, but to all of them, for all were to be rewarded by a portion of the land. The charge was not given to Joshua and to the elders only, but to all the tribes. As they all expected to have a dwelling-place in Canaan, so they were all expected to conquer the territory by their own exertions. They were *all* an enlisted host for God, and he never ordained that a part only should go forth in his great controversy with the condemned Canaanites.

If we ever neglect to render universal service as a church in the cause of Christ we shall depart from our trust and call, for the Lord has sent all his disciples to testify of him and contend against sin. He has sent us all to make known everywhere, according to our ability, the glad tidings of his salvation; and he has not given this command to this or that man, or to this or that body of men, but to all his chosen. Every member of the body has its own office, and no part of it can be allowed to lie dormant. To none has he said, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and find fault with those who do the work;" but to all his saints our Lord Jesus says—"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Every Christian man is described in Scripture as being a light, a light not to be hidden, but seen of men. Every child of God is described as forming a part of that "city set on a hill which cannot be hid." It is not only the ministers who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world; but "*ye* are the salt of the earth"; "*ye* are the light of the world"; all of you without exception. Each one in his own proportion and in his own place must be used as a vessel in the great house of the Lord: and we shall get away from our true position and our high calling if we excuse ourselves or our brethren from personal service, and then go and take part in public meetings and thank God for what other people have done on our behalf.

These Israelites, in the new fashion which they were trying to set up, were *departing from their own model*. That model was, doubtless, the siege of Jericho. In that siege there was much dependence upon God, but there was no neglect of instrumentality; and, though all they did was to go round the city and shout, yet in so doing they were literally fulfilling orders, and doing all that was commanded. Yes, if this would bring down the walls they did it thoroughly—they marched as bidden and shouted as desired. They *all* went round Jericho; they did not some of them sit in their tents and look on while the others paraded, but they all filed out in order. It might seem to be a perfectly needless procession, but it was commanded by God, and they all united in it. In martial array they all compassed the city, and *all* gave the shout, and down came the walls, and there and then every man went up to the prey, leaping over the ruined walls to strike his foe in the name of the Lord! That was their precedent and pattern, and they were departing from it very sadly when they said, "Let not all the people labour thither."

What, then, is our model as a church? Is it not Pentecost? Is it not those earliest days, that dawn of Christianity, that golden era to which we always look back as the heroic age of our holy faith? In that day did they not break bread from house to house, all of them? Did they not sell their lands and lay the price of them at the apostles'

feet? Was there not a burning enthusiasm throughout the entire company of disciples? We know it was so; and if we are to see again the triumphs of those primitive times we must go back to primitive practice, and every man and woman and child in the church must be consecrated to the divine service. "Child," did I say? Yes, verily, for "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." I suppose there is not one person present who heard that famous sermon by Matthew Wilks upon the universal service rendered by idolaters to their false gods, from the text, "The children gathered wood, and the fathers kindled the fire, and the women kneaded their dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven." The preacher's argument on that occasion was that which I would now press upon you, that all should take part in the work of the Lord. Distinct offices but united aims; diverse operations but the same spirit; many and yet one—so let it be. Would to God that the church would recognise this more fully, and so come back to the great precedents of her warfare.

Again, this error which we are carefully to avoid was no doubt *the dictate of carnal wisdom.* Spies were never of much use to Israel—two only of the first twelve were faithful—what did Israel want with spies? Better far had it been to walk by faith. To Ai they must need send spies instead of going up at once in the confidence of faith: evil came of it, for these spies counselled that only part of the people need labour up the hill. And, brethren, the best ministers of Christ, worthy of all honour, would be the cause of great mischief if once their carnal wisdom should make them think that they can supersede primitive plans with wiser inventions. I dare say the men-at-arms would have said that Israel's numbers were a hindrance to efficient fighting, and that the common sort were in the way of trained warriors and encumbered the battle. I know that some able brethren are of this mind. Have they not said in acts if not in words, "That young man is preaching—we wish he would be quiet; he makes such blunders in the Queen's English! He has a great deal of zeal, but there is no little danger in it. And those good sisters—we know they do a good deal of work which was never done before, but—": and they shake their heads at them. That is often the main contribution of the more prudent sort to the service of God! They generously lavish upon the younger folks their grave looks and their shakes of the head at innovation and zeal. There is the Sunday-school; well, that is a proper thing, because it is a recognised agency, but if it were started to-day for the first time many would shake their heads at that also. City mission work, again, is a tried and proved mode of operation; but in days gone by there was thought to be peril in lay agency, especially as the men were not college trained. Well, my brethren, there are many more holy agencies yet to be invented, and though they will none of them be perfect, our wet blankets will not improve them. Better far will it be to help the good, and as for the *little* mischief which may come of imperfect agencies, let the wise men supply the antidote and rectify the blunders. Anything is better than lethargy and death. Thank God that our people have a mind to do good, and if their zeal be inclined to wildfire, let us not quench it, but try to use it for holy purposes; for, after all, fire, wild or otherwise, is what we want. If we have the fire from

heaven in the form of zeal for God's glory, it can easily be regulated, but the most terrible calamity is to have no fire at all.

"But," says one, "may not the ignorant and indiscreet advocacy of truth by unqualified persons do a great deal of harm to the cause we love?" It may; but is the truth you believe so weak as to be in any serious danger from such an accident? Is not truth invincible and fully able to take care of herself? All she has to fear is the cramping and imprisoning agency of excessive prudence. With weakness for her guardian, and folly for her defender, she is yet safe! The God who protects her from her foes can assuredly save her from her friends. The danger lies in our carnal wisdom, which would cover the light with a bushel to prevent its being blown out, and wrap the talent in a napkin because it is only one.

We very frequently hear it said that there is no need for so much excitement and exertion: and this, too, has come from our prudent men:—we ought to take it coolly, the thing went rightly enough in our grandfather's days, the great men of the past did very well without all this stir! Well, we have observed that wet blankets are still on sale, and may be had at wholesale prices! Now, brethren, I do not know what you think about it, but I for one feel that there is much work to be done, and very little time to do it in. If I plunge into the work with all my might, I shall do none too much; but, at any rate, all my little might is demanded by such a cause. There is a blessed leisure of the heart which sits at Jesus's feet; but I am sure that it is not inconsistent with that violence which the kingdom of heaven suffers—"and the violent take it by force." There were people who complained, in the days of Wesley and Whitefield, because their zeal caused a great deal of fanaticism; but, thank God, the blessed fanaticism spread throughout the land; and it is not extinct even now, nor shall it be by God's grace, but it shall go on increasing till Christ shall come! Let us bring up our men, the whole of the tribes, weak though they be, and though their weapons be no better than the axes and coulters with which Israel fought the Philistines! Let us spring upon our foe as one man, even as in the days of old. Let us all go up to Ai; and as surely as God was with his people then, so surely will he be with our compacted hosts to-day, and the world shall learn again that there is a God in Israel!

Only once more upon this point: these children of Israel, in sending to the war only part of the men, were *breaking in upon the divine design.* The Lord never intended to have two peoples, but one; and so we read that the Reubenites and the Gadites came over Jordan to the war, although their portion was already conquered. It was the divine intent that they should be one army of the living God, each separate son of the seed of Abraham belonging to that army and fighting in it; he meant, that not some only, but all should see the mighty works of his hand, working with them to overthrow their adversaries. When Jericho fell, all saw it; and if Ai should fall before the divine power, they must all be there to see with their own eyes the glory of the Lord. I am sure it is so with the church of God to-day. Our Lord means to keep all his chosen ones as one army, and to instruct them all as one band. And when are we most manifestly one? When we get to work. If you

come to declamation upon your own peculiar points, I shall wish you good morning; but if you are going to work for Jesus, suffer me to go with you. I have marked the history of organizations formed for no practical purpose, and they have invariably come to an end, and I do not know that we need weep over the fact; but work to be done for Jesus is a mighty bond of union. Our God does not mean that his ministers should alone see all the death-beds, and be the sole spectators of the dying triumphs of his people. No, our brothers and sisters must visit too, and have their faith strengthened and their prospects brightened. He does not wish that preachers alone should see all the converts and encourage all the desponding ones. No, his wisdom perceives that it is good for all his servants to behold the trophies of his grace, and know how to use the encouragements of his promises. The Lord does not ordain that one or two should mourn over the evil of the hearts of men and do battle with sinners alone. No; he means all his servants in their measure to learn the lessons which holy warfare would teach them. Not to deal practically with souls is perilous to ourselves. Men who spend their time providing us with marvellous essays and papers in the reviews are most of them unsound in the faith; but if they went out into the world of real life, to save men, if they had to battle personally with hard hearts and evil passions in actual conversion work, they would find that their fine-spun theories are of no use; they would learn that the Puritan faith of our forefathers is the sturdiest of all weapons and the best adapted for the world as it is, and that the old truth is the sword with which alone you can pierce the hearts of men. Work for Jesus is an education for a Christian. What an education it would be for the philanthropist to see what the agricultural labourer eats, or rather does not eat! What a lesson for the sanitary reformer to see with his own eyes where the people lodge! What an education for a man of wealth to spend a night or two in the crowded chambers where our London workmen dwell! And in the same way, holy service is a training for us. In order really to know man's fall and the way of redemption we must go among the people and labour for their conversion. Hence our Lord will not excuse any of us from service in this war, because it would be to our great damage to be away from it; and it is for our encouragement and growth that we should take our share in it.

I will finish this part of my subject with a parable. In the days of chivalry a certain band of knights had never known defeat. In all battles their name was terrible to the foe. On their banners was emblazoned a long list of victories; but in an evil hour the leader of the knights summoned them in chapter, and he said: "My brethren, we cause ourselves too much toil. We have a band of skilled warriors versed in all the arts of battle, these are quite sufficient for ordinary conflicts, and it will be wise for the many if they tarry in the camp and rest, or furbish their weapons for extraordinary occasions. Let the champions go alone. Yonder knight with his sword can cleave a man in twain at a single stroke, and his comrade can break a bar of iron with his axe; others among us are equally powerful, each one being a host in himself. With the terror of our name behind them, the chosen champions can carry on the war while the rest divide the spoil." The

saying pleased the warriors well, but from that hour the knell of their fame was rung, and defeat defiled their standard. When they came together they complained of the champions because they had not sustained the honour of the order, and they bade them exert themselves more heroically. They did so, but with small success. Louder and louder were the notes of discontent and the demands for new champions. Then one of the oldest of the knights said: "Brethren, why do you blame us? The mistake lies here. In the old time, when the enemy assailed us, a thousand men were up in arms, and we who led the van knew that a gallant army followed at our heels. But now you have made us solitary champions, and the adversary takes heart to defy us, finding us unsustained. Come you all with us to the fray as aforetime, and none shall stand against us." Brethren, ye need not that a man interpret this unto you.

II. In the second place, my text contains THE COMMAND THAT ALL ISRAEL SHOULD GO FORTH TO THE FIGHT. "Take all the men of war with thee."

I will mainly address myself to my brethren in Christ; and what I have to say to them I say humbly, speaking mainly to myself. Brethren, we must have all our church members go to the war. I know this is our theory; but in practice we do not accomplish it. The baggage of our army is too heavy; the sutlers and camp-followers are too many. We want to turn out the drones, and we need an increase of true working bees. How is it to be done? *We must be ourselves deeply impressed with the evil brought upon idle Christians by their idlenesss,* and the evil which they bring upon the rest of the church. Only suppose a Christian—I will treat it as a mere supposition—living an idle life; give him nothing to do and he will become morbid with introspection; or he will grow quarrelsome, contending with all who hold opinions contrary to his own; or he will dishonour the name of Christ by sin. You know when it was that David fell with regard to Bathsheba; it was at the time when kings go forth to battle and he tarried still at Jerusalem. He had not fallen into that sin if he had not played the sluggard at home. Where was his duty as commander-in-chief? Was it not in the camp? Indolence is temptation. Certain of our churches are suffering from unsound teaching, but they are suffering as much from want of work. The moss is growing upon them, the rust is eating them up; the gold becomes dim, the silver is losing its brightness, and all for want of use. Oh, brethren, if we stand at the foot of a barren tree in the vineyard of Christ we know what must happen. As we look upon it and see no fruit our emotions ought to be those of bitterest sorrow; for the axe is prepared for those that bear no fruit. Alas, that we should have church members, not inconsistent in moral character, but excellent in many ways, and yet cumberers of the ground! There is a great deal of charity about of an evil sort, because it does not face the truth in honest desire for men's good. Let us be too truly charitable to indulge in such fatal charity. Let us sigh and cry when we think of our useless church members as branches of the vine that bear no fruit, of whom the Master has said that they shall be taken away—"For every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away"; and "men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." What sorrow will fill our

hearts if we reflect upon this! If we regard fruitless professors in this light, it will go further than anything else to make us successful in exciting all our brethren to active service.

We need to be impressed with the mischief which idlers cause to others. One sickly sheep infects the flock; one member who does nothing lowers the tone of the whole body. The indolence of prominent professors is not merely the waste of their own labour, but of that of scores of others. Leading persons are looked upon as a sort of model for the rest; and if So-and-so is content merely to fill his place in the pew and subscribe so much (or, rather, *so little*) per annum, then others will say, "We shall be up to the standard if we do the same." Every man in an army who is not efficient and really serviceable is on the enemy's side. What can the enemy more desire than that the opposite army may be encumbered with the sick? What can be better news for them than to hear that the hospitals are crowded, for then they know that a large number of men are occupied with the sick and detained from the fight. The enemy claps his hands and cries, "These sick men are worth many a gun to us." Oh, useless professor, you cannot serve the devil better than by joining a church and doing nothing.

I want my brethren to feel all this most keenly. I doubt not they do feel it, but I want to feel it more vividly myself; for when we get into a truly sensitive condition—when we who are ministers are alive upon this point—we shall stir up the people of God, *all of them*, and we shall see greater things than these.

Moreover, brethren, *we must hunt out the sin which leads to the evil against which we contend*, and I believe it is want of vital godliness in many cases. I do not know how my friend Mr. Newman Hall finds it—I suppose he does not suffer much from it; but I know pastors who say they have very respectable members, but nothing can be done with them. In some cases prayer-meetings are given up because the rich members come home from the City and dine at the hour which is usually selected for the prayer-meeting, and so they cannot attend. Dining is a most important business: it would seem to be more important than praying. Business men are so fatigued. It is true that we find carpenters and bricklayers and other workmen delighting in our prayer-meetings. Is this because they do not work so hard as your City men? In some quarters it is found impossible to carry on church work effectively because the very persons who should be workers and officers are resolved that their liberal subscriptions and Sabbath worship shall be the whole of their assistance to the cause of Christ. As to laying themselves out for holy work, they look in your face with wonder, as if they thought you had lost your senses when you propose any very arduous service to them. Now, this shirking of prayer and service is to be exposed and denounced in all faithfulness. It is often the sin which grows out of too much ease, self-indulgence, and luxurious living. It seems as if the more God gives a man the less return he is inclined to offer.

Whatever the secret sin of the church may be, let us try to discover it, and then by the aid of the Holy Spirit endeavour to educate all our members to work for the Lord. *There must be a continual insisting upon the personal obligations of Christians.* We who are known as Baptists

are of opinion that baptism, as the personal act of a believer, is a good lesson to our people as to their personal responsibilities; but I will not for a moment suppose that my Pædobaptist brethren are less earnest in enforcing the same truth. You also believe firmly in the personality of true religion, you teach the need of personal faith and consecration. Then we are agreed upon the great benefit of urging upon each man the duty of personal work for Christ. "What art thou doing for Christ?" is a question to be asked of all. We must make every believer feel that he is not his own, but bought with a price; that no amount of giving can compensate for personal labour for his Lord; that even he who by sickness and infirmity cannot actually work should render his contribution to the general effort by continual prayer. No one must appear before the Lord empty, but either by active or passive service must prove his gratitude to God.

And then, while each is responsible, neglect by one is injurious to the common service of the whole. I saw a cart standing this morning on the roadside with one wheel chained; there was no fear of its moving with that one wheel fast. Sometimes one chained wheel in a church will hinder all. We are all parts of a great machine, and the stopping of one part does not simply mean the one stoppage, but the hindering of the whole organization. If a piece of bone in the body becomes dead, it is not simply useless, but it becomes the nidus of mischief, and the cause of pain. It begins to decay, disease forms, and serious evil comes of it to the entire frame. A dead professor who is content to enjoy the doctrines without fulfilling the precepts of the gospel becomes a source of serious danger in the church of Jesus Christ, and we know it to be indeed so.

My brethren, *dwell upon the importance of the enterprise in which we are engaged;* and so act as to make others feel its importance. Why take all that trouble about furbishing up a doubtful point of divinity, which is of no earthly use when it is furbished up? Why all that Sunday morning spent in discussing far-fetched points of belief? What is this but sheer trifling? Some are greatly given to what they call "thinking"—"dreaming" is the truer word. Better by half plunge the old gospel sword at once into men's hearts and slay their sins in the name of the Lord than stand quibbling about certain characters upon the hilt of the weapon. One sermon about nothing will do more harm than all your speculations will do good. Men come to forget that the gospel is meant to save souls, and look upon it as a mass of interesting subjects. Certain sermons are said to be "intellectual treats,"—I think that is what I have heard them called. Our religion does not mean that, it means fighting with sin; it is, if anything at all, one of real downright practical work for Jesus Christ; and we must show that it is so. Our teaching nothing in elaborate language will make our people think that practical godliness is a small matter, and that intellect is better than piety. We must make men feel that to save a soul is better than to possess all knowledge, or even to gain the whole world! While others are making a new gospel let us labour to save souls by the old one. May God enable us to preach in awful earnest, and by this means, God the Holy Spirit quickening us, we shall get all our people to march forward to the battle of their God!

Above all, *let us pray for more grace.* We must never read the story of old times and say, "What a splendid denomination ours has been, can we not rest on our laurels?" Impossible. You must win fresh ones. Napoleon used to say, "Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me"; and it is so with Christians. You must advance; you must outdo the exploits of the past, and eclipse the deeds of your sires, or you will show yourselves unworthy of them. The battle thickens, and how shall we meet the growing demands upon us except by seeking for sevenfold grace? Our spiritual stamina needs to be increased. If we were to collect a number of men all wheezing and coughing, and only fit for the Consumption Hospital, and set them to work upon a railway, we might commend them for their diligence, but they would never accomplish much. On the other hand, gather together a company of burly, brawny men, and they will say, "Who art thou, O strong mountain?" and, before it can answer, it will be turned to a plain! See how they use the pick and the shovel! Vital strength is their motive force. O God, strengthen us! We are willing, some of us, but our strokes are feeble! Grant us, we beseech thee, more of thy Holy Spirit, and we shall accomplish great things. Strength delights in work, feebleness is afraid of it. Spiritual strength will produce universal spiritual service for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have done when I have looked into the future for a moment. If it should ever come to pass that the minister and all his people went forth to the war for King Jesus, what would happen? I seem to be in paradise when I think of it! If all, without exception, who name the name of Jesus, went earnestly into his vineyard, what life there would be, and what unity in all the churches! There would be no longer a name to live, but real living! There would be no divisions if all were alike zealous for the glory of the common Master. You would not hear of church meetings which are scenes of disturbance, and churches where pastors are unhappy; such things would be regarded as extinct animals of the ages gone by.

Then we should hear no complaints of our not being strong enough to do the work of our great cities and scattered hamlets. The very feeblest church, if every one did his share, would be strong enough for its position. Moreover, there would be no lack of funds for any holy enterprise. Ah, if God's treasure received from all as it receives from some, we should almost have to tell the people to stay their hands, because we should scarcely know how to use all their gifts. But the wealth which belongs to Christ and the service kept back from him canker in men's coffers, and the amount of which the Lord is robbed is almost beyond computation. The missionary societies, very well sustained on the whole, do not receive more than a tenth or a hundredth part of what God's people ought to give to so divine a work. If the merchant prince who contributes what is thought to be a handsome sum to Christ, only gave in the same proportion as many a pious girl who has to earn her living at so many stitches for a penny, and if all gave as the few are giving, we should soon supply all nations with missionaries.

And if this were the case, what enterprises would be undertaken? What overflowings of Christian zeal should we perceive? We should

be sending out messengers to discover every region which remained unsubdued, and we should at once be up and doing. Then the mission field would be strong with men of noblest fitness. I do not know how you think about it, but it does seem strange to me that we here in this little island are so close packed together, and yet a few scores or hundreds only go into the mission field. "Some of us have large spheres here, and we cannot be expected to go, can we?" I answer, the ablest preacher that ever lived is not too good for missionary work; the most useful man at home is probably the fittest for the foreign field. Let us each question his own heart as to the claims of the heathen: for my own part, I dare not sleep till I have honestly considered whether *I* ought to go or not. We tell our young men in the College that they must prove that they have *not* to go, or else their duty is clear. If some of the men of Israel had said to Joshua, "We cannot go to Ai," Joshua would have replied, "You must prove that you cannot go or you may not be excused." All other things being equal, ministers should take it for granted that it is their duty to invade new territory unless they can prove to the contrary. When I think of the number of young men who are well educated, and can read a capital paper at the Mechanics' Institution, and profess to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, it grieves me to see their talents dedicated so largely to meaner ends. Oh, bleeding Lamb, it does seem strange that we have a greater passion for literature than for thee! more care for fleeting than for enduring things!

France is wanting the gospel. See what one beloved brother in Paris has been able to do,—are there none who can do the like for other cities in that neighbour country? Here and there a good man can say, "I have made a competency"—why not live and employ it where you can lay it out personally for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom? Such a thing is being done by a few, it is not therefore impossible, and you who follow the grand example shall have your reward. See what Pastor Harms did in the village of Hermansburg, how he stirred up all the people until they gave themselves and their property to the Lord, and built a ship for the mission and went forth in it to Africa, company after company, to evangelize. Should it not be the ambition of a minister to feel that if he stays at home he will at least, by the Holy Spirit's help, produce missionaries by scores in the village where he labours. I wot the day cometh that he will be thought most happy who suffered and laboured most for Christ. When this great fight is over he who is most scarred will be most honoured, and he who dwelt at home at ease will think himself but sparsely blest because he put not in for his share of the war. Let us be all at work for Christ and his redeemed church! All at work, at all times, and in all ways for Christ! It is for that I plead; and then we will take another motto and say—the world for Christ, and Christ for every nation under heaven! This will be accomplished when the Spirit has aroused us all. O blessed Spirit, convert the church and it will convert the world!

Baptist Bible Seminary